

**JOEY RAMONE
INTERVIEWS
PIA ZADORA**

**MEXICO:
THE DRUG EMPIRE
STRIKES BACK**

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SPIN

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REASONS FOR
STAYING TOGETHER**

**RUN DMC: YO, BITE THIS!
METALLICA**

**THE RAMONES AND
THE TIES THAT BIND
THE PHILOSOPHY
OF JAMES BROWN**



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THE SMITHS • The Queen Is Dead but The Smiths are alive and well. The band's third Sire LP is a succession of emotional challenges: singer Morrissey/guitarist Johnny Marr originals ranging from tender to forlorn to furious — "Bigmouth Strikes Again," "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out," "The Queen Is Dead."

DEPECHE MODE • Depeche Mode plays Radio City Music Hall and the Los Angeles Forum on its current (and most ambitious) U.S. tour. Thanks to the tour, the band's Black Celebration Sire LP and the single "A Question Of Lust," the world's premier electro-rock band is becoming America's favorite.

ERASURE • No one does it better — with synthesizers — than Vince Clarke, whose credits include Depeche Mode, Yaz (with Alison Moyet) and The Assembly. Clarke is joined by vocalist Andy Bell on cuts like "Who Needs Love Like That" and "Oh L'Amour" from Wonderland, the Sire LP debut of the band Erasure.

PETER CASE • Once a street musician, then a founding Nerve, then a guiding Plimsoul and now a rock troubadour, Peter Case makes his solo debut on Geffen with a self-described collection of "snapshots" both haunting and hardboiled. Peter Case was produced by T-Bone Burnett (Los Lobos) and Mitchell Froom (Del Fuegos).

54-40 • "I don't usually listen to lyrics, but the words to this record keep running through my head," said one of the first talent scouts to hear the Vancouver-based band 54-40. The Reprise LP is titled 54-40; the first single is "Baby Ran"; both were mixed by Dave Jerden, engineer of Talking Heads' Remain In Light.

FIVE DIFFERENT ALBUMS



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This One



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Material chronology prawem autorskim



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TOP SPIN

Who's Who, What's What, and Why

Our article "Live Aid: The Terrible Truth," published last month, detonated a national controversy. In the article and our subsequent press conference we revealed the horrific scope of relief aid abuse in Ethiopia. We showed how the Ethiopian government, which controls the aid after it enters the country, exploits it as bait to lure millions of starving civilians to feeding camps, then swoops down on them and forces them onto resettlement marches upon which thousands die. An exact body count is impossible, but we reported at least 100,000 have died this way.

Ethiopia is fighting a four-way civil war, and the government is taking advantage of circumstances. Starvation is its prime weapon—relief aid, if it reached all or even most of the people it's intended for, would render that weapon useless. Therefore the government makes sure relief only reaches the needy when and where it suits them: the bait mentioned above, its own citizens, and the model resettlement camps that the western media see and relay back as evidence of relief efforts succeeding. Feeding centers, just inside the war borders enable the government to penetrate the perimeter of rebel territory and expand behind enemy lines like a raw plug. Other times the government has, and apparently still, diverts relief food to its own army and to the Russians, from whom they have bought more than \$4 billion worth of arms. (One of the three poorest countries in the world, Ethiopia has the largest standing army in Africa). And life-saving food has rotted on the docks while new shipments of weapons were unloaded instead.

The article drew an indignant and lengthy response from Bob Geldof (printed in full, page 79) which did not deal with the article at all, nor did it dispute a single fact we published. Instead, Geldof, showing the slippery acumen of a master politician, deflected the issue to a vague ideological indictment of *Medicins sans Frontières*, a highly active and well respected relief organization which has worked in the field all over the world and was expelled

from Ethiopia for speaking out against the atrocities. Geldof's statement contained a number of blatant inaccuracies, which we have pointed out and corrected on page 79.

Our article was about the terminal the mercy train stops at—the real Ethiopia, not the Live Aid fantasy portrait. When we started our investigation, we had no idea of the scale of this horror or how neatly and impactfully relief aid fits into it and how the close-mouthedness of field relief agencies seals the atrocities in like a lid. We realize, of course, that the relief agencies believe that since they are doing some good it is better they stay there, even given what that means, than not be there at all. It is an immense moral dilemma and is not just confined to the question "How much relief aid gets wrongfully diverted?" but includes "How much—how little—relief aid reaches the starving at all? And how much harm does the exploited aid do?"

Bob Geldof told ABC News in April, "Even if somebody came up with figures and said nothing worked but one person was kept alive, I'd say what I did was worth it." But at what price?

What should Live Aid have done? Come clean completely with what is happening in Ethiopia and redirect the money to where it could do good without also being the currency of evil. To not come clean—to obscure the truth—may well be what Geldof considered best, but did he consider, having done such a great job of exposing half of the famine tragedy in Ethiopia, that by covering up the other half, leaving us with an incomplete impression, this provided the perfect climate for the evil to incubate?

Live Aid defend their decisions by saying they felt they made the right ones, which is logical, but doesn't make them right. This is life and death, and there is a gigantic moral responsibility involved—Live Aid cannot simply throw a huge party, be entrusted with \$100 million, and then refuse to deal with the question of whether or not it is working, miffed that anyone would suggest such heresy.

For what Geldof achieved in the beginning with Band Aid and then Live



Glen E. Friedman



Gene Ambro



Ben Desolator/Rainco Ltd.

Aid, he should be praised. His intentions were certainly unimpeachable. In the beginning it was a simple proposition—feed the people. There were starving people who couldn't help themselves, and there were millions of people who could help them if we got together, and Geldof got us together. It seemed, as the money poured in, that this was all it would take. If only it were that simple.

We know now that it's not, and we have to respond. If we shine our lights bright and long enough on Ethiopia, we'll expose the inhumanities and maybe we'll be able to do something about them. At least more than just stand there holding the coat while a soulless government systematically destroys its own people who oppose it and

restructures society to suit itself better. But if it becomes a situation where we have walked into a room, flicked on the light, and discovered something we don't want to see, so we turn the light back off and leave the room, then we'll show ourselves how deep our caring really was and how heroic our stirring anthem "We Are the World" really is.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

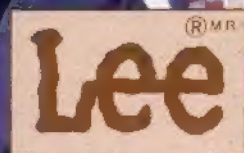
Top left: Run-D.M.C. (L-R) Jam-Master Jay, D.M.C., and Run. Top right: Lars Ulrich of Metallica. Bottom: the Romanes (L-R) Richie, Johnny, Dee Dee, and Joey.

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POINT BLANK



Robin Grouard

Letters

Edited by Karen Dolan

Baltimore murders

I am a white girl from East Baltimore who grew up in the '60s, the daughter of a cop. I was always told where I was or wasn't "supposed" to be. Somehow, though, I ended up at the peace rally in Memorial Stadium, running wild among blacks, whites, and the police. Some band didn't show up (I think it was Sly). That's when it all went haywire. Whites hitting blacks, blacks stabbing whites. I saw a hillbilly redneck getting beaten to death on an exit ramp, blood flying everywhere. The streets were covered with blood, and the cops were running hysterically. I was 12 then.

Now, living in L.A., I have lost the word "nigger" from my vocabulary. But there are still a lot of ignorant whites left in Baltimore. Whites who are really no better off than the blacks on North and Pulaski. They're still burning crosses out in Dundalk and Sparrows Point. It's everywhere, just to different degrees.

Cindy (last name withheld)
Los Angeles, CA

Barry Michael Cooper's article "In Cold Blood" (May) froze the blood in my veins. The problems in Baltimore are not simply "problems for blacks," they are serious situations that exist, to some extent, in all American cities. Cooper is a fine journalist, and I commend SPIN for devoting time and space to this serious matter.

Robert Tanzilo
Milwaukee, WI

Phrantly speaking

Having seen her open for Hüsker Dü in London recently, I am pleased to report

The streets are deadly for young blacks in Baltimore, where "disrespecting" someone can lead to a gunfight.

that Phranc (Flash, May) received a favorable response. In fact, Phranc's powerful, uncluttered folk music seemed to go over better than the Hüskers themselves, whose set varied little from the high-speed thrash I thought they were supposed to be moving away from. Here's hoping she can garner some airplay from her mix of pro-homosexual, anti-Reagan sentiments and acoustic guitar.

Will Dean
Ruidoso, NM

Picture perfect

Though I'm not especially fond of Billy Idol, I found myself staring at David Kennedy's photographs of him (June), almost expecting him to blink. One could definitely judge this magazine by its cover: complete and real.

Ciji
Ormond Beach, FL

Hunter Thompson

Thank you for your Hunter Thompson interview (May). Would that you had put his picture on the cover — I would have bought 10 copies instead of just one. At least he's an original, not just another pretty teenage punk musician.

Tracey Cascadden
Rohnert Park, CA

Lover letter

Jonathan Richman ("Funny How Love Is," June) is a true original in a sea of jaded copycats. Long after the dirge and death images of Neil Young, Dylan, and that ilk, the gentle poetry of Richman rings the most honest. We might have said (in the '70s) that changing the world or pondering the cosmos was hip, but in all honesty all we really wanted was a car with an AM radio and a "girlfren." Thanks for a great article, and thank you, Jonathan, for staying true to yourself. You've got an edge on all of us.

Jim Kunkler
Coronado, CA

Band on the runs

It would appear that Jon Savage has a severe impediment when it comes to differentiating between well-aimed cynicism and just plain old bad lyrics (Flash, May). How could one possibly look at the lyrics of any Gang of Four song and deem them comparable to drivel that includes such profound lyrics as "and now I got diarrhea"?

Rita Smith
Arlington, TX

Dear Diary

I certainly agree that the new INXS album is a bit bland, but the "What You Need" video shouts their talent and taste, the latter of which was lacking in Legs McNeil's article (Flash, June). INXS deserves better. The stereotypical boy-in-heat report was not only tasteless, it was degrading, annoying, and impertinent. I tried to excuse it as a vain attempt to entertain, only to bump into the unsatisfied brat again in the Carmel story. May I suggest that McNeil keep a diary to outlet his frustrations and spare us the boring details.

S.A. Harrison
St. Louis, MO

Corrections

Legs McNeil was so overcome by the feminine pulchritude of the audience at the INXS concert (Flash, June) that he neglected to find out how the band members spell their names. For the record, INXS is: Michael Hutchence, Tim Farriss, Andrew Farriss, Jon Farriss, Kirk Pengilly, and Garry Gary Beers. Our apologies to the band and their fans.

FEEL THE HEAT!

"Feel The Heat" from Jean Beauvoir. The first hit from his debut album, "Drums Along The Mohawk." Plus—Jean Beauvoir's "Feel The Heat" is the featured track from Sylvester Stallone's film, "Cobra."



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FLASH

Edited
by
James
Truman



BOB MARLEY: KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

Early in May, on the fifth anniversary of Marley's death, the Bob Marley Museum opened in Kingston, Jamaica. Housed in Marley's former residence—and adjacent to his Tuff Gong recording studio—the museum has a collection of photographs, writings, and memorabilia from all over the world. The exterior is adorned with a statue, murals by local artists, and a large marijuana plant—which was tactfully ignored by Jamaican prime minister Edward Seaga at the opening ceremony.

Funded by Marley's widow, Rita, the museum represents a continuing effort to keep Marley's legend and legacy alive. Its opening was particularly timely for Jamaica: the Bob Marley Centre, a huge, much-trumpeted performance arena in Montego Bay, has nearly crumbled to dust, with grass knee-high and an adjoining campground virtually returned to forest. The American company that built it and promoted a World Music Festival there back in 1982 pulled out under circumstances that have yet to be properly explained.

On a more global scale, the industry surrounding Marley continues to flourish. A mythic figure throughout the Caribbean and Africa, his

records—almost all of which are still available—still sell well in Europe and America. A new compilation of his best-known work, *Rebel Music*, is to be released by Island Records in mid-July. The story of his musical collaborators, however, is more checkered. While the Melody Makers, consisting of Marley's children, and the I-Threes, the vocal trio led by his wife, continue to work together—they'll be touring the US on a double bill this summer—efforts to revitalize the Wailers have foundered. "There have been many problems," observers Neville Garrick, Marley's former art director and one of the museum's organizers. "Bob's personality was so strong that it was really the unifying factor. With him gone, that mutual respect among the band just isn't tight enough."

Nevertheless, at least one ex-Wailer will be playing America this summer. After a self-imposed 14-year exile in Jamaica, Bunny Wailer plans to bring over his Reggae Consciousness '86 festival, with an all-star backing band. Why? "To complete the work that Bob began."

—Roger Steffens and Del Woodward

WORKING OUT

Belinda Carlisle is so pretty it's unreal. The new Belinda, that is—the one who magically replaced the slightly frumpy beach-beauty-gone-punk of Go-Go days. The new model is unveiled, exhibiting legs, on the cover of *Belinda*, her first solo LP. You could argue that the photographer who took the cover shot deserves a fatter royalty check than most of the record's musical contributors. But then again, Belinda really is that cute. She makes it easy to forget that her record is not a masterpiece; she makes it seem unimportant that, in conversation, she appears something of an airhead.

Belinda's transformation is more than cosmetic, though. It has its roots in the soiled history of the Go-Go's, the all-girl group from L.A., which leaped from local obscurity to national celebrity. The unexpected pressures of stardom and the need to try and sustain their popularity led to the drug and alcohol problems that plagued the band. The way Belinda tells it, the lowest point came in early 1985, on the band's "Rock to Rio" tour. It was Charlotte Caffey, Go-Go guitarist and principal collaborator on *Belinda*, who cleaned up first. Buoyed by her success, Belinda did the same. Nowadays, they're aerobics partners.

"I've become completely obsessed with working out," Belinda says. "If I don't do it, I get really crazy. I look in

Janet Van Horn



the mirror and I see PUMPKIN FACE. Like some days, you'll wear a dress and it'll look great, and two days later you put on the dress and go, 'Oh my God, why do I look so fat?' We call that pumpkin-face syndrome." PFS. Ah, those scientific terms.

To make *Belinda*, Belinda and Charlotte assembled an all-star cast, including a Bangle, Duran Duran's Andy Taylor, and Fleetwood Mac's Lindsey Buckingham. Charlotte cowrote five songs on the album, but it's Belinda's voice that is most distinctive—it has aged well, and surprisingly. You can even feel it kick life into a dubious cover of "Band of Gold." It's not quite Aretha, but it sounds heartfelt—as well it might, since Belinda now wears her own band of gold. It was given to her by her new husband, Morgan Mason, son of the late actor James.

But does the reborn Belinda really still want to rock 'n' roll? "I have to get this out of my system, and I am," she replies. "I don't wanna do this forever. Life's too short to go on the road for the next 10 years. I don't know what I wanna do—I don't want to be a rock 'n' roller forever."

In the meantime, she wants some hits, and is touring the country as support act to Robert Palmer to get them. Maybe in the future her albums won't have to carry stickers that say: "If you remember the Go-Go's, then you didn't forget Belinda Carlisle."

—John Cabrini

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

Rock 'n' roll mythology has prepared us for our heroes' drug overdoses, suicides, plane crashes, assassinations, and bouts of premature senility. Unfortunately, it hasn't prepared us for their hair loss. Nor, apparently, has it prepared them. With a couple of exceptions, such as Elton John and Gary Numan, who both fessed up to hair transplants, it is an unmentionable subject. Publicists clam up. Managers threaten reprisals. Las Vegas bookmakers refuse bets. But these are the current odds:

Roy Orbison: On the face of it, a classic example of a rock wig: plastic looking, always unruffled, slightly unreal. Possible mitigating circumstance: country musicians are the world's largest consumers of hair spray, and Orbison has worked extensively in Nashville. Overall odds: 6 to 5 it's a wig.

James Brown: While most men over 50 show signs of thinning hair, the Godfather of Soul's coiffure just gets thicker, while his pompadour extends at least one inch per year. Mitigating circumstance: the hardest-working man in show business hasn't stopped sweating in 30 years, and the sweat has acted as a preservative. But even odds it's a wig.

David Bowie: Latest word suggests the Thin White Duke is a little thin on top. Further evidence: the bizarre bleached-straw concoction he wore on his head during the

Serious Moonlight tour (3 to 1 on it being a rug) and his decision to star in *Labyrinth*, a role that demanded the wearing of a wig.

Elliot Easton: The Cars' guitar player has never looked at ease with his hairstyle. This could very possibly be because he bought it over the counter. Odds: 7 to 6 in favor of a wig.

Ric Ocasek: Are the Cars a two-wig band? Ric's spiky, jet-black hairdo is not totally convincing. Mitigating circumstance: neither is his taste in clothes. Furthermore, his girlfriend Paulina is too pretty to date someone in a wig. Odds: 11 to 5 against.

Little Steven: Why did he leave the E Street Band? What is going on under that head scarf? 7 to 4 that it's less than he'd like.

Mick Jagger: No wig (yet) but persistent rumors of a hair-weave. Possible evidence: his decision to star in a film with David Bowie.

Alan Vega: Vega, one half of the legendary synth duo Suicide, has been wearing the same headband for five years. Not even heavy-metal guitarists wear the same headband for five years. Odds are 5 to 4 that it's connected to a wig.

Bowie: 3-2 it's a wig.



Mark Weiss



Kristin Landon

Black Knight

Songwriter Holly Knight has garnered a reputation as an aggressive sort with an "artistic temperament." This is not a rap she shuns, but one she wears with pride—it comes with the territory. The territory, of course, is songs like "Love Is a Battlefield" and "Invincible" (written for Pat Benatar), "Obsession" (for Animotion), "The Warrior" (for Patty Smythe and Scandal), and "Pleasure and Pain" (for the Divinyls)—mainstream pop product with a distinctively troubled, perky edge.

"I don't like to skirt around issues," Holly says, by way of explanation. "My songs are confrontational, they just come out that way. They say what people don't want to say out loud. I'm a night person and I find a beauty in things that are dark and that hurt. It's part of a lust for life, and life is painful."

She concedes that a recurrent pain in her own life has been watching from the wings while others take her songs to the top of the charts. It was this frustration that prompted her to form Device, whose debut LP, *2283*, has just been released. Oddly enough, Knight herself chose not to take center stage. Instead, she went on a relentless, two-year search for a lead singer, which ended with Paul Engemann. "I didn't want to be lead

singer because of the added pressure and because the lyrics are tough and better suited to a guy. But people will get to know very quickly that I wrote all the songs. He's the delivery boy. I'm the boss."

Half of the Device tunes were written with Holly's producer/mentor Mike Chapman, a man she harassed into listening to a tape of her music seven years ago by calling him every day and whom she credits with discovering her. Their relationship is symbiotic: he spotted a fellow hit machine, and she wanted to learn from the best. "Mike's a genius, and I guess when you get to a certain age you want to share that talent. He helped me hone my craft. I've always been a human sponge with him. I thought right from the beginning, 'I'm gonna get everything I can from him.'" The result has been an incredible batting average—and an ever-growing line of singers at her door, looking for hit material.

Though she has less time for that now, she continues to write for others. And after years of pushing her way to the top, she understands aggression as a necessary tool of the ambitious, who are often talented. So when hopefuls approach her about writing a song or hearing their material, she is more patient than most. "I try to be cool with people who do that. Well, hell, it's what I did."

—Beth Landman

Revenge of the Nerd

"I'm a very meek person. I don't understand hostility very well. And that's one of the base elements of human nature that I like to see exposed. When fights go on in a crowd, I watch it like it's a sport. I'm just fascinated by it."

For a Northwestern University art project, Big Black singer and guitarist Steve Albini erected a Plexiglas wall and invited other students to throw things at him as he stood behind it. He wanted to use bulletproof Lexan and a revolver, but it was too expensive. "I just stood behind this Plexiglas screen, screaming at people to throw things at me. The most interesting thing about it was the people would come up to the line in a good mood, and as soon as I started insulting them, the mood changed completely. They got really hostile. And that was the idea. I wanted to push people over the edge to the point that they really would try to hurt me. People threw bowling pins, Jack Daniels bottles, a brick covered with spit. One guy threatened to bring a javelin, but he didn't. After about ten minutes of throwing things, the screen collapsed, and I was completely vulnerable."

Steve Albini is an almost cartoonish angry young man. A small-town Montana boy living in Chicago, he's a classic 98-pound weakling, with a gawky crew cut, wire-framed glasses that give his emaciated face an insectlike quality, and an unlikely Fu Manchu mustache. He speaks in a disarmingly mild midwestern monotone about his one-off project, "Run, Nigger, Run," and about how he wanted to call Big Black's second EP "Hey Nigger." Without prompting, he rants against "beatbox disco rap" as an aesthetically empty music buoyed by white guilt; when confronted with his ignorance on the subject, he says, "I should listen to music I hate just to hear how bankrupt it is."

This sounds, like everything else he says, heartfelt, but also calculated to piss me off. Which is a part of Big Black—the band is nothing if not confrontational. With guitarist Santiago Durango, bassist Dave Riley, and a beatbox (!), Albini sketches a series of brutal, violent images: a Minnesota town where the preferred pastime is child rape; a dog trained to attack black people; a sawn-off shotgun rammed up a mob-disfavored asshole. He presents these images cold, without comment. "One of the reasons we're misunderstood," he says (angry-young-man tip-off No. 1), "is that sometimes we present situations in such a way that we think people ought to be able to draw the same conclusions we draw. As opposed to spelling out exactly how we want people to think. I don't



(L-R) Steve Albini, Dave Riley, Santiago Durango.

consider us a message band or a band with a purpose."

Big Black's music is, like that of so many new midwestern bands, heavily influenced by the jagged Anglo art-punk of the late '70s: the rhythmic crunch of the Gang of Four, the cluttered distortion of the early Fall, the cold ellipses of Wire. In the Midwest, these icons are still unshakeable. "What I think of as a sort of an analog to what we're doing," says Albini, "is something like the Pop Group, where there was an obvious political or social undertone, but they put so much effort into the music that it was obvious that that was what was inspiring them, and they were not just creating a backdrop for their images. I just like playing guitar."

Beats dodging bowling pins from behind a collapsed Plexiglas wall, you suppose.

—John Leland

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Soul Mania!

Printed across the front of guitarist Dan Murphy's amp are blocky letters that spell out Raw Power. At first it would appear little more than a brainless homage to Iggy Pop, an affectation left over from Saturday afternoon gigs in the parents' garage. But in light of Soul Asylum's reputation as the loudest band in Minneapolis—"Sort of a trademark of ours," boasts Murphy—it reads more like a warning.

Onstage the group lives up to its promise, turning the dial to 10 and roaring through high-energy tunes with a fierce disdain for subtlety. "The high volume is really a holdover from when we first started," explains Dave Pirner, guitarist/vocalist of the mangy foursome. "We didn't know how to play, so we just turned everything up and made it sound like a complete wall of shit with lots of feedback and stuff. We've been playing for an long now that it just doesn't sound right unless it's real loud."

With four years of experience now behind them, Soul Asylum is the latest group to aim for mass acclaim. Though they're lumped together with Hüsker Dü and the Replacements—an association that hasn't hurt them—band members have mixed feelings about it. "It's too bad that people call us a 'hot band from Minneapolis,'" says bass player Karl Mueller. "If you're a hot band it shouldn't matter where you're from." The problem is compounded by the fact that Hüsker Dü's Bob Mould has produced all three of Soul Asylum's

records, including the latest, *Made to Be Broken*. In typical midwestern style, it's high-speed; but while one might expect Soul Asylum to go for the sonic jugular on every cut, the album has a few surprises, most notably "Never Really Been," a revved-up country-and-western ballad. This rural detour is indicative of Soul Asylum's no-plan approach. "You never know what's going to work," says Pirner. "If your band feels comfortable playing it, it probably will come across. If it doesn't, you might as well trash it."

Speaking of trash, the band is planning to release a cassette tape of outtakes, live recordings, cover songs, and interviews, entitled *Time Incinerator*. "A lot of people are suddenly finding out about us and wanting to know about our past," states Murphy. "The idea is to show these people what we've been up to for the past four years." Driving the point home, Soul Asylum has been doing a good amount of touring, going out on 10- or 15-night jaunts from its midwestern home base. While the accommodations haven't been great—usually a sympathetic fan's couch, floor, or bed—the band doesn't gripe about life on the road. "The whole idea is to not give a shit, to do whatever we want, or else it's no good," says Murphy. "It's got to be fun. After all, we're not making any money at this."

—Michael Kaplan

(L-R) Grant Young, Karl Mueller, Dave Pirner, Dan Murphy.



Monica Dee



Paul Robb/Photo

(L-R) Michael Cudahy, Dan Salzmann, Liz Cox.

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS

"Danny Partridge is the biggest influence on our entire generation and anybody who says he isn't is probably lying," Michael Cudahy, singer/guitarist for Christmas, hits the cracked frame of his black-rimmed eyeglasses, conjuring up images of David Byrne before he sends the glass lens flying in the "Once in a Lifetime" video. "Pretty funny, huh?"

Christmas has been something of a fixed oddity on the Boston music scene. With the desire to go commercial since their 1981 inception, they've managed to come through the local club circuit without sounding like the Cars, the Del Fuegos, or 'til Tuesday. It's not because Christmas's postiche is made of finer stuff (though it is), it's just that they don't have the same outlook on life that every band on the square does. Presently, singer/drummer Liz Cox's main concern is the one-horned goat featured as "the Living Unicorn" at Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's Circus. "This guy's got a headache for the rest of his life. And then they give him unicorn chow, but he really wants goat chow. He's got an identity crisis to die for."

Christmas makes the best of their own identity crisis. Their debut album, *In Excelsior Dayglo*, is smart, adolescent, retentive—the aural equivalent of bug juice (remember bug juice?). The songs are as familiar as a summer in holiday camp. It's music you've heard before, on commercials, on Broadway, on acid. Whether paying homage to Pee-wee Herman, the Byrds, or favorite TV shows, the band ransacks the vocabulary of pop culture with a teasing intelligence and sly, obscure humor. You can even hear the Ramones on "Loved Ones," a farcical account of Adolf Hitler's suicide. Why Adolf Hitler? He, the Virgin Mary, and Pete Townshend were chosen by Liz, on a college-application questionnaire, as persons from history she'd like to have over for dinner. Christmas has a knack for juxtaposing the serious with the childish, combining them in such a way that one serves to magnify the other.

In spite of the competition, Christmas intends to make it big and retain their sense of humor. Even if they don't, the band finds it easy to exist. "Any four people with instruments is a band," says bassist Dan Salzmann. "The Japanese can't help it. They're manufacturing instruments that are very good and competitively priced. Most people can afford them."

—Michelle Krell

Yakety Yak

"I used to pretend that Tchaikovsky could compose through me, and it worked."

—Chris Lowe, *Pet Shop Boys*

"Sometimes I'm not sure what a lot of our songs are about."

—Jim Kerr, *Simple Minds*

"I could never get along in a band with a posturing, posing lead singer."

—Keith Richards, on *Led Zeppelin*



Pia Zadora and Joey Ramone: the Long and the Short of it

A maid greets Joey at the door of Pia's spacious Fifth Avenue apartment, and immediately asks him to remove his shoes. He is wearing purple socks. Pia wanders in from a photo session, wearing nothing but a bathrobe. On the wall, etched in glass, is a life-size portrait of Pia without the bathrobe, which Joey considers at length. On the way to the interview, he had been concerned about Pia's commitment to punk rock. His fears were groundless.

"It's like the Rolling Stones were for us when we were kids," she enthused. "Remember when they first did that song 'Let's...er... Go to Bed Together'? That was like, wow, big stuff."

*"Let's spend the night together," Joey deadpanned. But it wasn't *he*; instead she lent him her white stretch limo to get back downtown.*

Joey: Why did you make an LP of show tunes?

Pia: I actually started singing those songs six or seven years ago, when I was an opening act for Frank Sinatra. Then I went through a whole bunch of crap with my lousy movies and pop records. I had people behind me kind of steering me in that direction, but it

wasn't really my bag. Pia & Phil was actually my manager's idea, he thought it would be right for me for credibility. It was really a career-saving move, to be perfectly honest.

It wasn't the kind of thing you'd have done ordinarily?

You know, it was important for me to do something like that, because nobody ever really thought I could do anything except look sexy on a poster and go shopping. I mean, I'd become a cult figure to a certain extent because of my movies, but unfortunately it was because of how bad they were!

What was your first movie?

Santa Claus Conquers the Martians. It was a Christmas movie for kids.

What was that like? The title's great.

It was a cute film for kids. I was seven years old, I didn't have good advice, what do you want me to say? But I had a hit with the title song, "Hooray for Santa Claus." That was my first hit record. So I've been working for a long time now. When I was 21 I stopped and got married. I tried for a while to be the perfect wife, society this, society that, but it wasn't working, so after about a year I went back to work.

Was your husband happy about that?

He encouraged me. He told me to get out of the house and go back to work. He sensed that I had to do it. I'm just not comfortable with that society stuff. I mean, we were just invited to the White House, but my husband won't take me because he knows I don't want to go.

Can I go instead?

Sure. I've no interest.

So what's your husband really like?

He's the greatest guy in the world. He's like the original Mr. Mom—he loves my world, the young people around me, the baby. He's heaven-sent.

How does he cope when you're on the road?

He comes with me! He sits at the hotel with the baby and shows her the sights in every new city, brings her to the concerts... he's just great.

But when he's not there, don't you ever get...er... sidetracked?
No, I don't. It's not my thing.

That's nice.

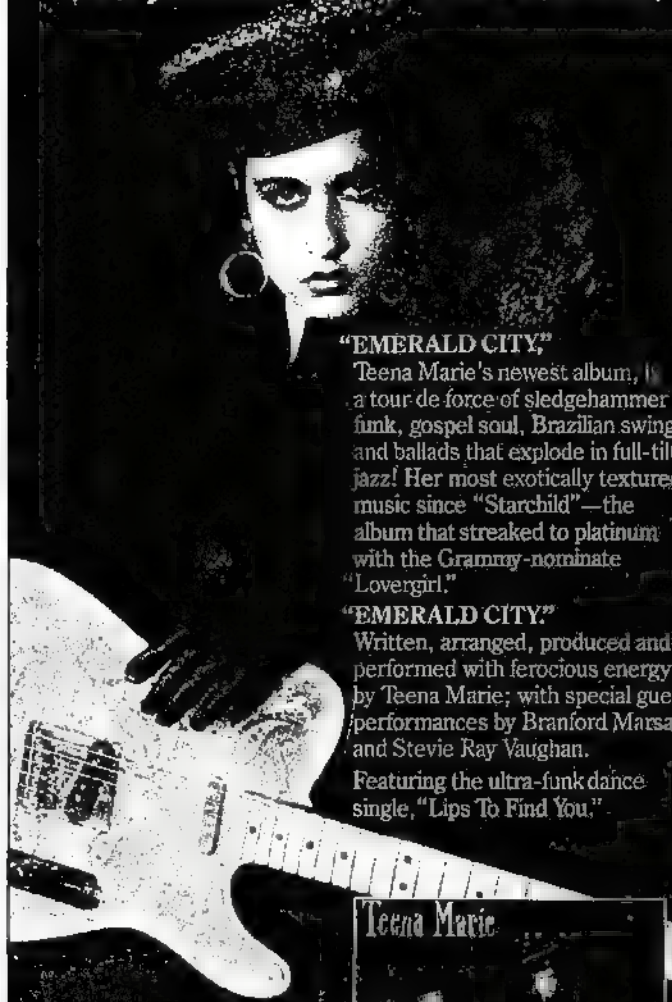
Now my husband, that's another story.

Oh yeah, let's get the dirt here.

This guy, when I met him he was 47

"EMERALD CITY"

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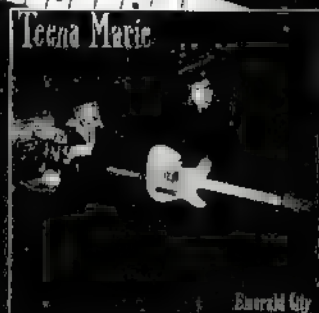
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years old, he'd just come out of a divorce and he was, you know, very desirable. He had every Cosmo cover girl and undercover girl. They were just coming out of his ears. Baking cakes on his doorstep, one in the back door, one on the roof, one waiting in the basement, another in the elevator. So I know I have to keep an eye on him.

How do you do that?

By calling him 83 times a day, just to instill the fact that there is a hidden eye watching him from somewhere. Like if he has a business dinner I'll take my mother and go to the same restaurant and sit at another table. You know, look at him out of the corner of my eye and every once in a while wave. It's cheaper than a detective. And he knows I'm violent. Just give me a butcher's knife and you're finished. Tell me, Joey. Do you think I'm crazy?

No! I like you. You're all right.

Actually, I like you better meeting you than if somebody had just given me your record.

That's good. Because a lot of straight people think I'm nuts.

OK. What's the life of a sex symbol really like?

Um... I don't know. I don't consider myself a sex symbol.

Well, what about the sex scenes in your films. Did you enjoy doing them?

I didn't dislike doing them. The thing you do is escape from them by immersing myself in the character you're playing. Someone once asked my husband that question. Of course, he's naturally uncomfortable, but he looks at it with the right attitude. He says, 'As long as she comes home for dinner.'

Were you embarrassed by the scenes with the garden hose [in *Butterfly*]? Er... well...

I didn't look at them literally. Besides, nothing was done, you know, the hose was never even used on me.

Well, I hope not! How did you cope with the abuse from the critics during that period?

I coped with it by understanding. I knew my product was crappy, and I also understood that people thought I was just a creation of a Svengali. They thought I got married and my husband said, 'Come here, little girl, you can go onstage and be a star.' Which was not true, because I've worked since I was a kid. So it made me rebellious, more determined.

Right. Now, where were we here...?

(Pia leans over to read Joey's question list.)

"How old were you when you lost your virginity?" (laughs) I don't believe it! You wouldn't have asked me that question if I hadn't read it? You were just looking around it thinking, "How am I gonna say this?"

Well, you know, I have to do this...

I tell you what—I don't remember, it was so long ago! Jesus Christ, who wrote that question? He must be a pervert!

It was James Truman.

Oh, fabulous. That's why he didn't want to come.

We wouldn't let him. He just gave us all these horrible questions. OK. What advice will you give your kids about falling in love?

That's a nice one. I'm gonna give them the advice that I always took myself, that it's better to get to know somebody before you jump into the sack with them. Because then if you jump into the sack and fall in love, and you liked them already, you're home free.

How did you get involved in recording with Jermaine Jackson?

Don King. Don was over at the house one day and he heard this song, "When the Rain Begins to Fall," which I'd recorded with a backup singer. He loved the song and took it to Jermaine, who also liked it. Jermaine didn't know much about me, he hadn't seen any of my movies because his wife is very Mormonesque and never allows him to see anything that shows, you know, the sleeve above the elbow.

Really?

Yeah, she's tough. I don't blame her. If you have a guy like Jermaine, it's a pain in the neck. When we were on the road together in Europe, Jesus, I had to kick the girls off of him. I mean, they throw themselves on the floor and take off their hats. You know what I mean?

I know. Sometimes, when I go to a Jermaine concert, I notice the little girls wear hats!

Joey, let me ask you a few questions. Why did you come to interview Pia Zadora?

I did it for my career. It was a career move. I did it for the credibility. I see. Credibility. I hear it.

And I decided my next album will be show tunes.

Fabulous!

'Cause I mean, it looks simple, singing show songs, but after listening to you I realize it's not as simple as it seems. So what do you think of punk rock?

I love it. I personally think I'm over it age-wise, but if I was 17 I would get into it. I love listening to it, but it's not my world.

Yeah, I can understand that. What about Rodney Bingenheimer?

I love Rodney. He's a little doll, he really is. I like his hair now. He changed it.

And Alice Cooper?

Great. I love Alice.

What about Rodney Dangerfield?

Oh, he's too much. I used to be his opening act. You know the classic story, no respect? Well, he was onstage and his dressing room went up in flames.

I guess he was hot that night. Do you like David Letterman?

Aagh... David is, uh, unique.

You rolled your eyes. You don't like David, huh? OK, what about John Waters?

I love John Waters. You see, I want to be the next Divine.



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FLASHES

Rock! Exene Cervenka will star in avant-gardist Beth B.'s new movie, to be called *The Manipulator, Salvation . . . Have You Said Your Prayers Today?*, or something else entirely. New Order and Cabaret Voltaire will share the soundtrack. Exene plays a **born-again Christian** from New Jersey involved in a blackmail plot against a TV minister. In the business, this is known as **typecasting**.

Best **rumor** of the month: Joe Strummer will **settle his differences** with Mick Jones and join Big Audio Dynamite. Worst rumor of the month: Joe's **record company** started the previous rumor to jack up interest in his career, which is headed in a **folkish** direction.

Papa Pop: Former golfer Iggy Pop recently returned from Switzerland, where he made a new record with **David Bowie**. It will be Iggy's first release in three years and his first collaboration with Bowie since 1977, when they recorded the **classic** *Lust For Life*.

Following last month's disclosure of **vice squad raids** on record warehouses in California, Dead Kennedy **Jello Biafra** and four others have been charged with distributing harmful matter to minors, a charge which carries a maximum one-year jail sentence. The trouble stems from the **explicit** sex poster accompanying the Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* LP.

A national commission on pornography has come up with a list of **2,325 magazines** that it claims are obscene. Though the list has yet to be released to the public, advance word indicates that the report's **explicit descriptions** make it an extremely juicy read. Will SPIN be on the list? Are we fucking good enough, **or what?**

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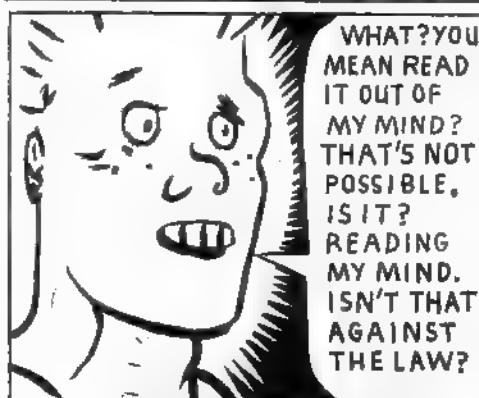
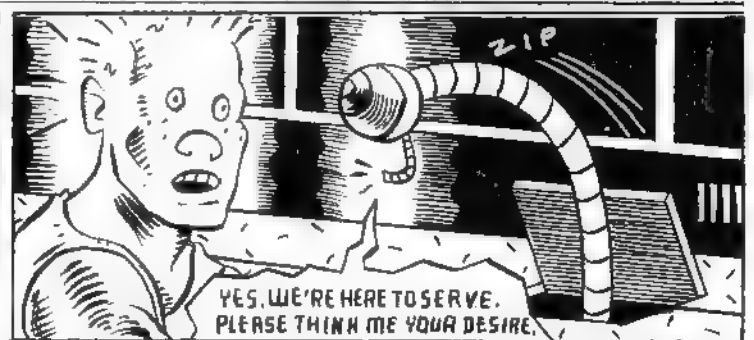
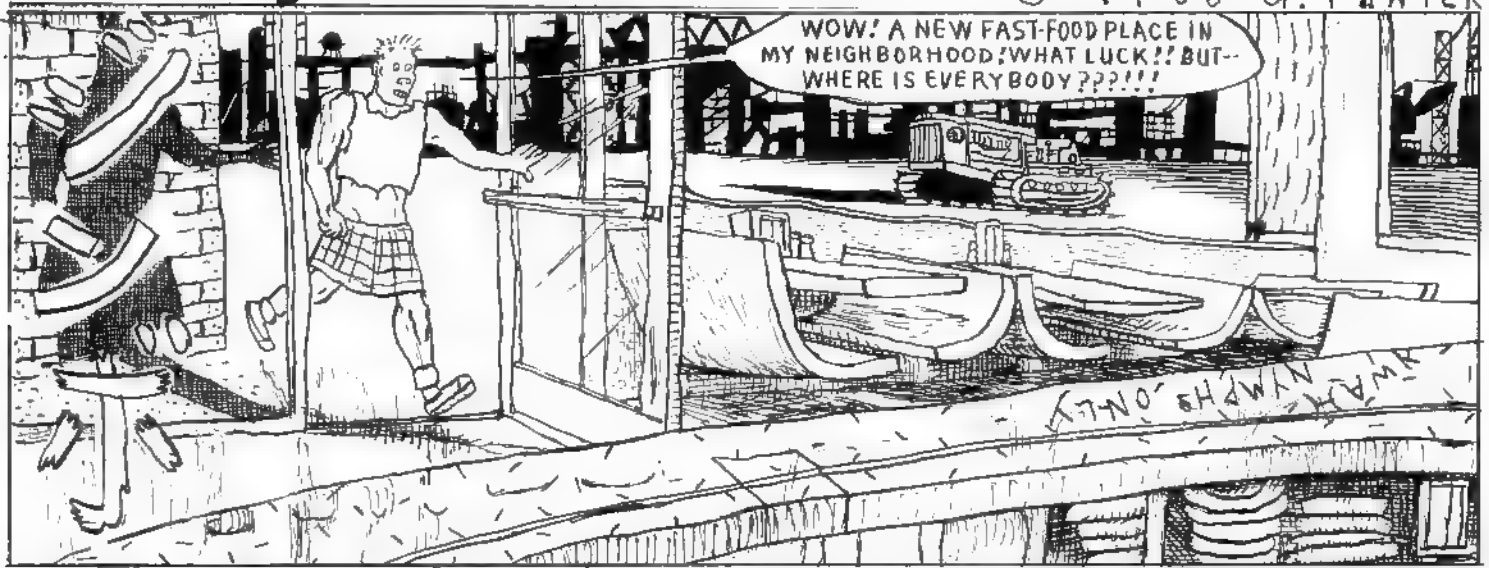
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producer DOUG DILGE SEAN FERRER written and directed by BLAINE NOWAK



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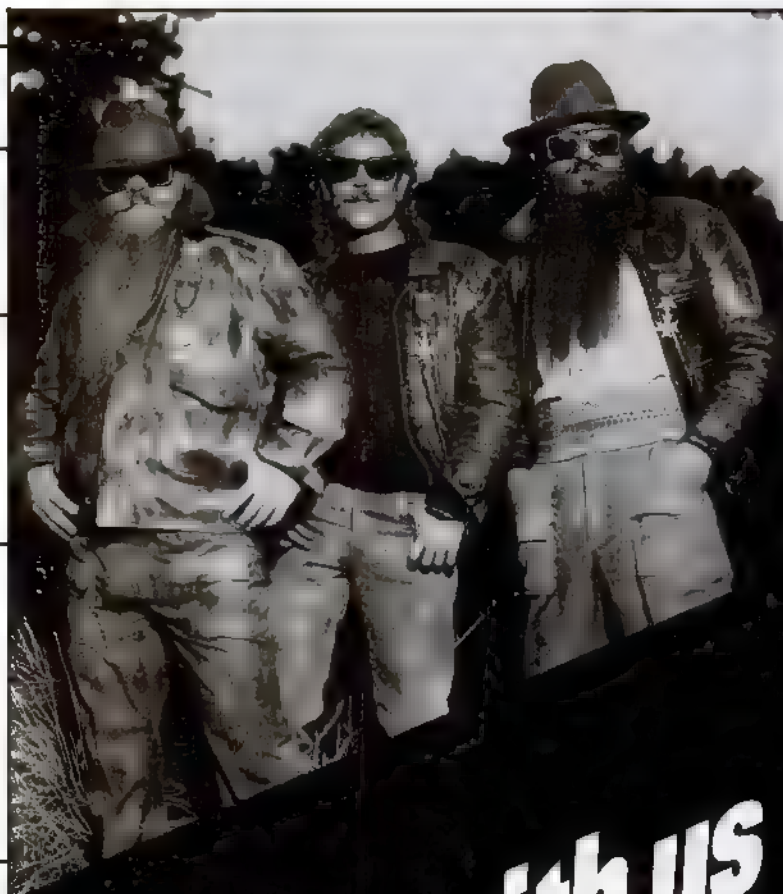




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Edo

STRANGE MEAT

My friend, a long-haired New York University student into SST bands, tells me the Meat Puppets are like the Grateful Dead, only on a level higher, more evolved. He hangs out with the DJs from the college radio station, so I guess that means he knows.

I bring home all four of the Meat Puppets records to find out. They are country/psychedelic/hardcore, the kind of young white American hybrid that lends itself well to lengthy, detailed dissection in print. The Meat Puppets give good column inch. Their sound is complicated, at first inaccessible, hazy from sitting too long in the sun. When I put on *Meat Puppets II* (as in *Led Zeppelin II*), my roommate, who also has long hair but is a total headbanger, just doesn't understand. He sulks in the kitchen, wondering

When the Meat Puppets sing about being "Out My Way," there's no telling what planet they're coming from.

Article by Sue Cummings

why he can't play Celtic Frost.

Just when I'm starting to dig the laid-back southern-rock guitar noodling on "We're Here," he goes over to the turntable and takes hold of the vinyl like a scratch DJ. Big ugly squawks leap out of the speakers. "I thought they were a hardcore band," he says. "Look! It's produced by Spot. He sure did ruin St. Vitus's records." I guess Robert won't be seeing them with me at the World tonight.

The Meat Puppets are no big deal. If you want to talk to the Meat Puppets, you talk to the Meat Puppets. They have no personal assistants, valets, right-hand men, flunkies, or social secretaries. You have to call their booking agent only if

If you want to talk to the Meat Puppets, you talk to (L-R) Derrick Bostrom, Cris Kirkwood, and Curt Kirkwood.

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they're on the road, which they are right now. They're driving around the country in a van pulling a U-Haul with all their equipment, which they loaded themselves, like gypsies. When they're on the road, they never have a number where they can be reached.

This is the sixth tour in four years that the Meat Puppets have done SST style. They take turns driving and sleeping in the back. They take turns bugging the club managers for more beer. Derrick Bostrom, their drummer, sells T-shirts before and after the show. They've established a network of sofas in every town, the underground music railroad.

Guitarist Curt Kirkwood says he sometimes has the most fun just driving down the road when everyone's asleep. They'd like to sign with a major label, which would mean at least enough money for a driver. Now that Hüsker Dü and the Replacements have done it, the Meat Puppets seem next in line for such a

"Everyone has a life story," I say. "Well, I was born in Wichita Falls, Kansas," says Curt. "Moved to Phoenix when my mom married a horse trainer. I lived an incredibly suppressed, boring existence, except when I got to ride my motorcycle. When I was 17, I started trying to form rock bands. When I was 18, I formed one called Keilee, which means warrior in Apache. It wasn't my idea. All the other guys in the band were Chicanos."

"He was the only white bread in the group," says Cris.

"Yeah, I lived with a lot of Mexicans," says Curt. "My father is into computers. He was gone most of the time since I was three and a half. Mother is working on her sixth marriage. Father was her second, he's got two other kids. My stepfather is some kind of a jerk. I think Mother got married last Saturday."

"Our next rock band was called the Granite Reef. We did Lynyrd Skynyrd,

"What about children?" I ask.

"Ditto," Curt replies.

It is going to be a long drive to Boston. "So is it true," I ask, "that you started your musical career playing in a basement and smoking pot?"

"Yeah, that was some horrible house," says Cris. "It rivals anything you have here, except the South Bronx."

"Derrick's mom gave us the guest house," says Curt. "It was her soon-to-be-ex-husband's. We spit all over the walls. We'd whack flies with a rolled-up newspaper, and they were all over with our big black luggies. We'd turn the lights out and throw appliances at each other."

"What made you calm down?" I ask.

"I haven't calmed down," says Cris. "I've gotten worse. Nobody likes me. They all used to like me."

By 11:30 AM the Meat Puppets are in Boston. Curt has driven the whole way. They stop to call a friend, then go to his house. Without pausing to shower, eat, or undress, Curt immediately falls asleep on the living room floor. In three and a half hours they have a sound check.

It occurs to me that this type of schedule affects what they put onstage. By showtime at the Paradise, 5 o'clock, they are dizzy and wired. The college kids in the audience slam dance without the encouragement of alcohol, bouncing even through a slow song like the Everly Brothers' "All I Have to Do Is Dream," overlooking the vocal harmonies that wander off-key. When Curt looks most strained, after the fifth or sixth song, they shout, "Turn up the guitar!" A second wind enters him, and it's full speed ahead.

Later, back at their friend's house, Curt says he reached a point where "I realized I was there to entertain those people. What's really important to me is that point onstage when there's just utter chaos. The whole room feels like it's taking off, and everyone in the room knows it."

"A couple of times, I can't remember what song, but I almost fainted at one point. I was in another world, and I kept on playing, and I knew it wasn't me. It was something being projected at me. I came pretty close to passing out twice... partial excretion, partial excitement. It's the smoothest, grooviest feeling. The best rock 'n' roll reminds me of teenagers on angel dust fucking."

"We're the underbelly of rock 'n' roll. We're not like the Replacements. We rely a lot more on musical diversity. But I guess you could compare it to the Replacements in that they try to be idiots."

"We are human idiots; we act like buffoons. We don't have to smoke dope or drink alcohol to do that. We get messed up with just our own thoughts. We use our proficiency with the instruments to rake people's brains over the coals. We're not really employable in other professions. We've all gone through such bitter head trips that we make great artists."

"Whenever it gets wild we tell the audience to get nude. Cris has gotten nude onstage. In one of the bigger places he whipped his dick out. We can play good, but mostly we like to put our balls into it. We can play good, but that's secondary; we play possessed."

Steve Winwood is Back in the High Life



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development. But for now they're enjoying their freedom.

"When we work, we really work," says Curt. They travel with only one sound man because they make more money that way. "We tour for 30 days straight, then when we go home we can afford to sit around for three months." Home is in Phoenix, Arizona, where Curt's girlfriend takes care of their twins, age two and a half. "Don't say she's my wife," says Curt. "She was married before and won't like it."

After the show in New York, the band goes to a diner. It is 3:30 AM; now they have to drive to Boston for an all-ages show at 4 in the afternoon. Soft rock wafts through the air from concealed speakers: "Last night I didn't get to sleep at all. No, no..."

"I'll have 15 loaves of baked lard," Cris tells the waitress.

"I'll take the kielbasa," says Curt. "Do you mind if we climb up on the counter and do a few numbers?"

"I don't have too much of a life story," Cris tells me.

"We can play good, but that's secondary; we play possessed."

Doobie Brothers, and Steely Dan covers. But then everyone started becoming incredibly trendy."

"Thanks to new wave and all that crap," says Cris.

"I didn't like that stuff," says Curt.

"Derrick likes baseball," says Cris. "I think he's a Mets fan. Today we mentioned seeing a live sex show, and Derrick says, 'The hell with that, where are the live nude Mets?'"

"I told Richard Grabel [a journalist from Creem] that I had a monorail in my backyard," says Curt. "But what I didn't tell Richard..."

"Oh boy, a scoop!" I say.

"...is that hamsters are fruit and so are children."

"And what led you to this conclusion about hamsters?" I ask.

"They grow on trees, they ripen, you squeeze and bake them into pies, or peel and eat them as a snack."

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SPINS

The Velvet Underground, Rubber Rodeo, the Silos, Lee Perry and the Upsetters, the Smiths, the Ramones, George Clinton, Star Search, Icehouse, Katrina and the Waves

Edited by Glenn O'Brien and Sue Cummings

Platter du Jour

The Velvet Underground Another View Verve



Did you ever wonder why in "I'm Waiting for My Man" when the narrator goes up to Lexington 1-2-5 he's got \$26 in his hand? What's he going to do? 2.6 bags? Two \$13 bags? In fact, in the days that this album was recorded they had \$3 budget bags of dope. That's how far back the Velvet Underground goes.

They're like the Jimi Hendrix of bands. They've been gone for years, but they keep putting out new albums.

This could be the album the Velvet Underground didn't release because they thought it was too uncommercial. It's sort of their *Between the Buttons*. Actually, it's a collection of miscellaneous tapes that were found during spring vault cleaning, and Polygram Records will be the first to admit that they don't know what these songs are: demos, mistakes, outtakes, unfinished. . . . Either they weren't asking or the post-Velvets weren't saying.

Starts off with yet another version of that great set opener "We're Going to Have a Real Good Time Together." Here's an old fashioned club band for you: They had an opener, a closer ("Afterhours") and probably a break song. This song wasn't even on any of the four original Velvet Underground albums, debuting on the live double album. And this is the best version yet made available of the best break-type song since Duke Ellington's "Fifteen Minute Intermission." It's a rock 'n' roll fast break, Ramones-velocity rock 'n' roll, recorded September 30, 1969, with precise guitars and perfect vocals. This sounds finished. Probably would have gone on an album except they had so much other good stuff, and somebody probably said, "Hey, it's a break song."

"I'm Gonna Move Right In" is your basic rock and blues, Stones, Santanaesque, "Can't You Hear Me Knocking?"-type instrumental jam for six and a half minutes, recorded three days earlier. This Reed, Cale, Morrison, and Tucker composition is as close as they ever got to the Stones and Santana. Very nice Slim Harpo-type bass zooms and great crystalline guitar picking.

Although there is evidence that Lou is lyrically and

philosophically (and maybe physically) stronger than ever, listening to this album and to his new one, *Mistral*, one wonders if it is sometimes better not to know how to play guitar. It seemed that when Lou was untutored he was pure invention; *Rock 'n' Roll Animal* signalled the end of his guitar playing career.

But here are some great moments in guitar playing, right up there with "Sister Ray" and "White Light, White Heat." "Hey Mr. Rain" is a great death-drone rave-down with lots of Thuggee Kali cult chords on Cale's viola and San Francisco-style rhythm guitar and Dylan DeSade vocals by Lou. When he sings "Hey Mr. Rain, won't you follow me down . . ." it sounds like he's singing "Hey, Listerine . . ." Sometimes you wonder what a Velvets song would have done on the Indian-Pakistani charts.

"Ride Into the Sun" is your basic Lower East Side pre-reggae analog. This approach to guitar eventually turned into "Sweet Jane," and this must be a demo or a goof. It's got a really weird organ on it and a weirdly lyrical sleazetoned guitar solo and something that sounds like a Sicilian mandolin and ridiculous piano thrills that sound like frozen fake eyelashes shattering against a mirror.

There's even a Velvet Underground version of "Yellow Submarine" here called "Coney Island Steeplechase" with Lou singing cornball words campily, except that the words are actually sometimes really striking: "We'll take the subway out to King's Highway"; "It seems so nice, like summer with ice"; "Like a sister and brother we'll cling to each other when they find out their parents are mad."

"Guess I'm Falling in Love" is a monster-mash instrumental. It chugs like an industrial clothes dryer in a Stephen King satanic laundromat movie. It chugs like Blue Cheer doing Fats Waller. The EQ is all wrong in a spectacular way. This is surf music influenced by earthquake. It's the rawest thing you'll find, but it's fresh as a cold, tight oyster, and it's been sitting on a shelf since December 5, 1967.

Then there's "Hey Mr. Rain, Part Two," which sounds

a lot more like country music than the first taste, maybe because Cale tuned his viola or something. But when you listen hard there's something halfway between Charlie Daniels and John Cage about this. This is definitely as existential and compelling and chicly Stygian as anything they ever did.

Most of the material here is credited to Reed/Cale/Morrison/Tucker, but six of the 11 songs here were recorded soon after Cale left the group and was replaced by Doug Yule. The funny thing is that Yule is remembered mostly as a Lou clone who turned Frankenstein and thought he was Lou. Actually, from the sound of this it would seem that Doug started off as a Cale clone, and when Lou heard how good he did John he decided he'd rather have two of himself.

The latest things here are "Rock and Roll" and "Ferryboat Bill," both recorded June 19, '69. "Ferryboat Bill" is sort of a breakneck gallopade like the Loaded LP's "Lonesome Cowboy Bill," except that it has totally weird instrumentation and arrangement, being a sort of toy store freak-out. Reed has performed a lot of campy material, but rarely is the music as nutty as the lyric. It is here.

This version of "Rock and Roll" is really hot. It's a little slower and more cumulative and acoustic. Lou is in great declarative voice, and he strums up a mellow storm, and the band rises and falls like a bay. It's a transcendental, noble tune done in a fantastic mood. It was alright.

This could be the best album of the summer and it's 19 years old, more or less. Why not buy it and share it with a 19-year-old?

—Lafcadio Bougainvillia

Above: The Velvet Underground was (L-R) John Cale, Maureen Tucker, Lou Reed, and Sterling Morrison. Their "new" album might be the one they thought was too uncommercial.



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Rubber Rodeo
Heartbreak Highway
Mercury



The Silos
About Her Steps
Record Collect



Michael Grecco

One of the later books of the New Testament (you remember which) says we'll know The End is near when we start seeing hybrid monsters roaming the streets and bus stations: snakes with lions' heads, tigers with eagles' wings, and so on. It's with no lack of trembling that I can only conclude: We're living in the last days right now. How else to explain the existence of Rubber Rodeo, a bunch of people from Rhode Island who play what purports to be country music with synthesizers? Make that act of heart-felt penance now.

But before you do that, you should know that even a dose of righteous terror ought not to interfere with the modest pleasures to be found in the grooves of Rubber Rodeo's latest LP, *Heartbreak Highway*. First, these guys are from Rhode Island. If that were not hilarious enough, they wear silly high-tech cowboy suits and have elaborate post-new-wave hairdos. This is all, thank God, in a spirit of fun—I think. Their music is agreeably insubstantial spaghetti-western soundtrack filler, like if Ron Howard were to direct a remake of *Once Upon a Time in the West* with Chuck Norris and music by Til Tuesday. They do a cover of Nilsson's "Everybody's Talkin'," which pales next to the original, although it does begin with a quote from the best James Bond movie theme, "You Only Live Twice."

Where I come from, country songs are sung by rough-hewn (but thoughtful) good old boys who've had enough bad

marriages, bad drunks, and bad luck to know something about life. Which brings us, naturally, to *About Her Steps* by the Silos.

The Silos are not from anywhere specific that I can tell, and their country-flavored music has virtues not normally associated with rock 'n' roll: modesty, a rational sense of proportion, quiet good humor. Still, these guys rock out—gently. One of their songs ("4 Wanted Signs") has a pedal steel guitar solo in it that is a thing of beauty, if not necessarily a joy forever. They also have a song called "Shine It Down" that alludes to "things that cost me more than I bargained for," which is the story of your life even if you don't know it yet—especially if you don't know it yet. Either the Silos are would-be-profound rock poets or they're regular guys who've been around the block once or twice.

Actually, I can't make any really serious artistic claims for this record although I was favorably impressed by this lyrical description of the ideal living situation: "Sleep on a double bed/Don't have no woman/Got a cat instead." It's a good feeling and a bad feeling at the same time, which has something to do with humor and irony and country music and art.

—Peter Carbonara

Above: *Rubber Rodeo* is (L-R) Bob Holmes, Hal Cragin, Gary Leib, Trish Milliken, and Barc Holmes.



Lee Perry and the Upsetters
Some of the Best
Heartbeat

This is the *Upsetting Station* reporting the news as it happens. Lee Perry (aka Little, King, Scratch, Gong, Upsetter, Pipecock Jackson, Guerilla Priest, etc.) was for many years sort of Jamaica's George Clinton. The diminutive and very eccentric genius just wouldn't stop producing kinky reggae for the masses. He first revolutionized the genre in the '60s with singles recorded with his own Upsetters, featuring future Wailers Carlton and Aston "Familyman" Barrett and other notables (Bob Marley most prominent among them), then went on to almost single-mindedly invent reggae's dub variation during the early '70s.

This is Upsetter! *Shocks of mighty! Hit*

me back! This diverse collection doesn't necessarily contain Perry's best work from 1968 to 1974, but it does offer a sampling of 13 different Perry flavors. The thing about Perry is, though he definitely has a sound—kind of an ominous shuffling of bass and drums behind whatever vocals and unexpected sound effects he was into that week—he switched styles and gimmicks faster than any other producer ever, and many of his tricks predict the wackiest black music of the '80s from rap to scratch to the employment of found sounds. Both Perry's first major hit, "People Funny Boy" (a condemnation of either Joe Gibbs or Coxsone Dodd, depending on who you believe) and "The Thanks We Get" (the record's thickest sound collage) are accompanied by the cries and babbling of babes, while Linval Thompson's "Fu Man Version" sounds like a kung fu soundtrack written by Ennio Morricone.

Hey, so you've come back to mash up de place, eh? Perry utilized identical rhythm tracks for "Shocks of Mighty," which features a frantic Dave Barker toast, while its rhythm re-run, "Set Me Free," has the vocalist crooning soulful. Likewise, Bob Marley and the Wailers' "Duppy Conqueror" precedes the dubful "Upsetting Station." Though this collection of ska, rock steady, and lovers' rock ditties is a mere foreshadow of Perry's later psycho-dub masterpieces it's definitely a collection worth possessing.

—Richard Gehr

THREE LETTERS THAT STAND FOR THE ULTIMATE IN CLASSIC ROCK: **GTR**



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The Smiths The Queen Is Dead Rough Trade

How about those Smiths, huh? Their last LP, *Meat Is Murder*, debuted at Numero Uno on the British charts and guess who they bumped? Boss Springsteen! What, some skinny British vegetarian taking on Max Weinberg's snare drum? You've got to be kidding.

But *Meat*, with its Celtic guitars, skiffle rhythms, Anglicized rockabilly, and

music hall bellowsings was straight "Born in the UK" material. The songwriting was everything you liked about the British Empire — Mungo Jerry, Gilbert and Sullivan, Tommy Steele, and Poly Styrene — all layered under the gab and whine of a Manchester eccentric. Then, after *Meat* conquered the Isles, the Smiths crossed the ocean for an uneventful American tour during which lead singer Morrissey railed against the insufferability of both the human condition and various record executives.

Now, the Smiths are back with a new LP, *The Queen Is Dead*, and the group has a few more quid to spread around the studio. As a result, Johnny Marr's musical contribution is beautifully documented. The guitar-synth arrangements are thematic ("Never Had No One"), subtly shaded ("The Boy With the Thorn in His Side"), and often exciting ("The Queen Is Dead" and "Some Girls Are Bigger Than Others").

No doubt for some the enjoyment stops

Below: Morrissey of the Smiths. Bigmouth strikes again.

with Marr. Morrissey's operetta-style delivery and polemic lyrics have lost a few listeners. But before you snap on the vocal eliminator, let's give the guy a chance. The sound of his chosen vocabulary sits well atop the Marr concoctions. His wordplay is excessive, but that's what they're into over there in England. If you sift through the early writings of Oscar Wilde, you end up with a few gems at best. Ditto for Morrissey on Queen: "As I climb into an empty bed/ Oh well, enough said" ("I Know It's Over"); "I never had no one, never" ("Never Had No One"); "And now I know how Joan of Arc felt/ As the flames rose to her Roman nose/ And her Walkman started to melt" ("Bigmouth Strikes Again").

Now, I'm not saying he's John Lennon, and I'm not saying he's the Monkees. But you gotta admire a guy who can rhyme "rusty spanner" with "play pianner" and who can espouse the beauty of a double-decker bus collision. The only place where the Big M falters is his deathbed recollection on "I Know It's Over." This kind of testimonial is best left in the more experienced hands of an Alan Vega.

But *Queen* is a successful outing. It's memorable in a minor-league way and if nothing else it demonstrates that most admirable trait about the Smiths and about Brit rock in general — the wonderful breeding and development of those two-headed songwriting units. There's something inspiring about these UK teams — Lennon and McCartney, Lennox and Stewart, Jagger and Richards, Godley and Creme — these bonded mates who seem to weather thick and thin for the sake of the song. That's why even the breakup of Wham! had its sad side. Over here in the USA, it's more like every man for himself. So if the Smiths put you uptight, loosen up and give 'em a little room to breathe. Remember, they're different over there in England.

—Rich Stum



Leslie Franklin



The Ramones Animal Boy Sire

The best parts of the new Ramones album are the ones that, if played on your Walkman with the speed control adjusted to really fast, sound like the Monkees on Dexedrine. But "Something to Believe In," a pseudo-AOR attempted teen anthem, is the sickly offspring of the Starship. Oh well. A real radio single is not what you can ask of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Rock Stars from Queens.

Just when they get the formula for a hit, they decide to call the cut "Somebody Put Something in My Drink." The dum-dum boys can never do anything right by trying to. How are all those promotional coke-pushers going to take a song like that to the radio stations? Sorry, Joey, this is no more mainstream than the glue-sniffing and lobotomies. And my personal problem with "Somebody Put Something in My Drink" was that it was highly addictive; the more I listened to it, the more I liked it, had to hear it, walked around the office singing it. Long-term exposure to this song will make you a misfit. Attraction to this song means you already are one.

The misfit/failure/geek in "She Belongs to Me" is also a victim, this time in the "Needles and Pins" vein. "Don't tell me howda luv my baybuh," sobs the pathetic Joey when someone edges in on his girlfriend. It has all the goo-goo appeal of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time," and could almost be a radio biggie. Almost, but not quite. The acoustic guitar and vocal harmonies are lovely, but this kind of stuff may only alienate the purists, the ones who "bought the first Ramones record when it came out." They don't want their Ramones to grow up and learn to play. *Animal Boy* is at its worst when the Ramones are trying to escape their glorious past, dodging rock critics chasing them with adjectives like "minimalist." It's a drag when they're trying to prove they're not limited to a genre that has been proclaimed exhausted.

Animal Boy is great, though, when the Ramones ignore that and unself-consciously have their way with every kind of punk song, including "Love Kills," an ode to Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen. (Is this on the Alex Cox soundtrack? Sadly not.) "Eat That Rat" is thrash prototype, down to the bridge, which slows, stops, counts off before plunging back into the verse: "ONE-TWO-THREE." "Hair of the Dog" is about not just alcoholism but guilty alcoholism—it's the same old stuff rendered with crystalline Ramones purism. On "Crummy Stuff," Joey sings, "I've had enough of that crummy stuff." (Could he be alluding to that venerable Punk Rock Tradition?) "Crummy Stuff" is too patronizing for even the faithful to enjoy. But following the streamlined "She Belongs to Me," this unevenness reveals the child within this maturing band as honestly as a mid-life crisis. Can all you baby boomers relate?

Sure, it's calculated to make a single album to please both your faithful, limited audience and to access the larger demographic of mainstream AOR consumers. It's also schizophrenic. Demographics are something every career-conscious person of the '80s (i.e., yuppie) considers. Schizophrenia is something yuppies consider. Can you ask more of the Ramones than you would of your Calvin Klein self? Only if you believed the Ramones became real musicians after *Rocket to Russia* and musicianship disqualifies people like the Ramones from making legitimate records at all.

Don't stand there in your paint-splattered, way-rad army boots and tell me you're too good for Calvin Klein.

—Sue Cummings

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George Clinton
R & B *Skeletons in the Closet*
Capitol

This is George's way of telling you that the history of art is what you make it.

This is George's way of pointing out that the radio is negotiable and that rhythm will always triumph over demographically supported format allegations and get-rich-quick alibi soundtracks.

This is George's way of showing us that language and music enable us to travel in time, space, and concentrate. Squeeze me a glass of meaning, baby. Fresh resonates on the fly. Word up!

There is an incredible imbalance, if you ask me, between the number of songs about love and food. Everybody needs both, and if you have to get by without one or the other for a while, let's

face it, we know what's No. 1. So that's a good enough reason to write a song like "Do Fries Go With That Shake?" But when you and your peers are also the particular targets of certain bad foods, if somewhere out there there is a hamburger with your number on it, then it may be time to fight back.

"Mixmaster Suite" is a remarkable excursion into cocktail-shaker scratch music, uniting the wheels of steel with the Waring Blender, Fred Waring, Eubie Blake, Mary Tyler Moore, and minuet.

Is George saying something about the new minimalism of hip hop and possible connections with easy listening? Is he saying something about John Cage, music concrete, dada, the found object, and their relation to tearing the roof off the sucker? About the old 4/4 and its relation to the new whomp-that-sucker boss 4/4 beat?

Maybe. Definitely George is into a format-challenging bag, which is like no bag at all. "Only playing the class gigs/never taking it to the bridge/We got R & B skeletons in the closet. . . ." George wants to let all the cats out of the bag. So this lot of the funk here is extremely cosmopolitan, archetypal, and tonically infectious without being even close to what is down by trend on the airwaves. Son of the JB's. "Maggot Brain" strikes back. As you might expect, there is a certain recycled element here, and lots of quotes, and George does rerun by you certain cosmic themes, like "One Nation

Above: George Clinton's latest LP is a noble experiment you can dance to.

Under a Groove" and Rubberband-type men and Sly Stonisms, and ancient R & B gumbo recipes, a lick here and a stitch there. George has adopted the adoptive techniques of the mixmaster to create seamless, effortless, hardworking jams that operate outside the narcissistic/anarchic conventions of hand-held blaster mix and the relative love jones homogeneity of commercial black radio. It's a noble experiment that you can dance to while you learn to chuckle deep inside.

NOTES:

1. It's funny that the guy that the Red Hot Chili Peppers canned from the band for being too square, sincere, Aquarian, and old, guitarist Jack Sherman, is the one Red Hot that George, their producer, got to play on his own album. Kids!

2. Vanessa Williams turns in an entirely credible performance as guest star vocalist on "Hey Good Lookin'."

3. If you have ears, wear em: George is at least as important as Marcel Duchamp or Francis Picabia, he dwarfs Andre Gide, and is in some way a latter-day dentifrice proven effective against the jet-sam of Andre Breton.

—Lamont Egbert Des Esseintes and Imelda Mugabe-Arhollee



Star Search
The Winners Album
MCA

When the best isn't good enough, I put on *The Winners Album* and get inspired. It's easily the best collection of TV talent on record. It really is.

The Winners Album is more than just the best singers from my favorite TV show, *Star Search*. There are some losers, too. Actually, *Putting on the Hits* is my favorite TV show, but they don't have a record. All the *Star Search* semi-finalists are included, 13 cuts in all, including a full-length version of the "Star Search Theme Song." No kidding.

Some past *Star Search* winners have gone on to become big recording stars. Sawyer Brown had two chart-topping country albums and several No. 1 singles, and a friend of mine is stopped on the street all the time by people who mistake him for Sam Harris, last year's best male vocalist, whose debut LP went gold.

I wonder if people will mistake me for this year's best male vocalist, Kenny Kenny. Kenny, who's from Waterbury, Connecticut, is one of three \$100,000 grand-prize winners on the album. His Stevie Wonder sound-alike cover of Gladys Knight's classic "Neither One of Us" is fantastic. Wow! I'll bet Kenny drives a red Mercedes convertible. I know I would.

I would really like to go out with Peggy Blu, *Star Search*'s best female vocalist. Her cover of "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man" is as good as Aretha's, the Queen of Soul, if not better. I swear. The backup singers are pretty good, too.

If you like authentic-sounding reggae music, you'll love "Promised Land" by Tchukon. Tchukon, from Toronto, won the grand prize for best group. Unfortunately, they'll have to split it five ways. They must all drive Honda Civics.

I can't listen to "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Marshall Titus and drive at the same time. I just can't. Whenever I hear that song, I start to cry. And I still can't get over how much Rozz Morehead's cover of "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" sounds like Crystal Gayle. How does she do it? I like a singer with emotion, and Joey Gian from North Miami Beach sure shows plenty on his cover of "I've Got the Music in Me," a big hit once for Kiki Dee. I played "Gimme What I Want" by Pressure Point for a DJ who worked at Studio 54, and he said he liked it. And Andrea Frierson's show tune, "I Must Be a Star"! What a way to end an album! It's just like being on Broadway. Really is.

—Scott Cohen

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IMPORTS

English Swing

What the hey? Could this be former English punk boy **Vic Godard's** music wafting its way across the room as we quaff a frosty HEINEKEN IMPORTED BEER and take a glance at some new—and fashionably timid—sounds from Merrye Olde England? Yes indeed, on *Trouble* (Rough Trade), the former pop star and present bookie (really) has penned a set of standards for the '90s. He croons his cool, catchy ditties over effervescent tones provided by members of top jazz group Working Week. Gosh. Jazz must be happening in England this month.



It's certainly an impression reinforced by a spin of bubbly group **Matt Bianco's** latest, the frankly titled *Matt Bianco* (WEA). You've got jazz, salsa, soul, and even something vaguely resembling a tango here—a slithery step sideways for what was once merely another boring white disco unit.

SHORT SWINGS: Nothing from England, however, gets any milder than infinitely droil (and consequently très hep) humorist **Ted Chippington's** *Man in a Suitcase* (WEA/Vindaloo), which features a deadpan version of Lennon/McCartney's subversive classic, "She Loves You" ... MTV comedy stars **The Young Ones** (an acquired taste) dredge up pop star Cliff Richards for a hi-larious Comic Relief benefit single (and video), "Living Doll (The Disco Funk Get Up Get Down Go to the Lavatory Mix)" (WEA) ... But enough already. **The Screaming Blue Messiahs'** *Gun-Shy* (WEA) contains roll 'n' rock exactly the way Elvis Presley intended it. Fer sure.

—Robert Cameron



ADVERTISEMENT



Katrina and the Waves

Waves
Capitol

There's no reason for this record to be this cool. As a marketing device, Katrina and the Waves were a stiff concept the instant they started, and the concept was dead tired. As a band, they were a marketing device. Upbeat kicky good times in colorful canvas hi-tops! Sunny new pop high jinks in melodic teen tones! Big fun! Big bucks! Big surprises!

Big, big surprise. This is the coolest record around right now. Kicky can be ass-kicking; goofy can turn downright mean; upbeat can get lowdown and get back up again. Fun is, after all, fun — and don't you forget it.

"Is That It?" kick-starts the album, sets the pace, delivers the goods. Katrina is thrilled to see just how pissed off she is, just how pissed off she isn't, and just how pissed off she could get if she really wanted to. It's a revelation and a good laugh, for her and us both. It frees her up to get boisterous and bouncy and daffy and goofy just like her image expects, and to do a goddamn good job of it. She gets tough on "Lovely Lindsey" and gets another good laugh out of it — which makes it even tougher. And it will make all the tough-guy guitarism that will surround these tunes on the radio and MTV even funnier.

This album is full of ultra-cool guitar riffs, all of them stolen by guys who were laughing as they drove off, but Katrina's singing is the kicker. She's swallowed all the pop any stomach can stand — *ABBA in Memphis*, *The Beach Boys Sing the Merseyside Songbook* — and she spits it all back with the sweetest of smiles, the sunniest of snarls. She shouts, she whistles, she testifies, she cheers herself on. There's nothing, she swears, as fine as riding shotgun on a quick cruise to nowhere.

Every ooh! and every whee! and every wo-oh-oh! on *Waves* cuts on every edge, and *Waves* is a record crammed with ooh! and whee! and wo-oh-oh! The twentieth time you've heard one of these tuneful tunes, you might notice the way the words twist silently toward slap-happy despair; the twenty-first time they'll twist back again like they did last summer. This is summer music, radio music, car music; this is colorful pop with good time kicks. This is the darkest sunny little record in all the sunny world right now and the coolest one, too.

—Bart Bull

Icehouse

Measure for Measure
Chrysalis

It's hard to imagine where this band's name came from. Picture these Australian guys sitting around after a typically bitchin' rehearsal in one of their dads' garages (or whatever they've got for garages in Australia) and throwing band names at each other.

"How about the Aussie Rhythm Kings?"

"No. What about the Koalas?"

"The Wallabies?"

"The Eucalyptus Leaves?"

And so on, long into the night. Eventually, someone suggests "Icehouse," and the lads say "dig it!" (or whatever they say when they mean "dig it!" in Australia) and the members of the newly christened Icehouse have cleared the toughest hurdle any band ever faces.

Unlikely as it is as far as band names go, "Icehouse" describes this group about as well as any monicker could. This record is frosty. These guys use every conceivable kind of electronic signal-processing device to render their languid melodies completely ambient. This music is like permafrost at the South Pole, like particles of ice on the coldest of cold beer bottles. It is symmetrical, pristine, and utterly serene in its total remoteness.

Measure for Measure is a high-gloss leisure product of such seamless engineering that it seems more like a natural object (a snowflake, for instance, if we want to push that chilly metaphor a little) than the work of sweaty human hands. Produced partly by Rhet Davies (who's done similar buffing jobs on albums by King Crimson among others) using the "Mitsubishi 32-track" system, this LP was made by and for people who savor the silence between tracks on compact discs. Eno, who's been trying for years to make a virtue of this kind of blandness, guests on "treated piano and keyboards." Singer-guitarist-songwriter Iva Davies does a not bad early Bowie impression and, if we can believe the evidence of the album cover, has incredibly shiny and manageable hair. Nice shoes, too. His songs fall into roughly the same category as his singing. His guitar playing we can only speculate about, buried as it is under a heap of noise gates, flangers, stereo choruses, tape delays, and so forth.

Measure for Measure will not waste your time with any cheap displays of human emotion. Whether you find that appealing, alienating, or dull depends on where you stand and what kind of day you had at the office.

—Peter Carbonara

Above: Iva Davies, lead haircut of Icehouse.



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UNDERGROUND

Column by Andrea 'Enthal

Turn on the radio. The import show plays only British records. Go to an import store. British again. Non-British imports are the most subterranean music in today's underground.

Sweet Thunder is a not-so-sweet excursion into darkness. Those who hated the Party will probably hate *Thunder*, too — it's like a package of long-lost Party outtakes. From Major Records, P.O. Box 236, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3207 Australia.

sound somewhere between a harpsichord and a child's toy piano, while Steven Brown puffs tissue-soft notes on his clarinet. *Anna Domino* is a dreamy excursion through a pastel sensitivity from the quiet music label Disques Du Crepuscule, 37 Rue Du Metal, Brussels 1060 Belgium.

I, Braineater, a Vancouver-based whoop-and-grunge ensemble, borrows a dirty growl from the glam and Iggy eras and the vocabulary from a bathroom wall to get the recipe for the album *Artist, Poet, Thief*. They add a dash of bash-bash drum and bass beat, though not enough to make them hardcore. Then they stir in '50s-inspired echo-chamber disease, one side order of surf-beat, and a Cramps-meet-rockabilly whoop. The resulting mess is heated at 98.6° in the kitchens of Zulu Records, 1869 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 1M4 Canada.

With a dark, sweet, and throaty voice that's cooler than a penguin in a Haagen-Dazs factory, **Anna Domino** has created an album of sensitive beatnik sensibilities aimed to convince anyone that ballads can be OK. Slowly and delicately, Domino weaves multitextured rhythms made of tinkles and tom-tom passages, synthesized shimmers that shoot like Fourth of July sparklers, and pleasingly plucked upright acoustic bass. It's an adult album, with songs about hangovers, superficial socializing, the fleeting nature of summer, and men. Men drive Domino "Koo Koo." They drive her to drink and sleep it off and drink again. Men like Marc Moulin accompany Anna on a synthesizer programmed to

Borghesia is a Yugoslavian quintet whose album *Ljubav Je Hladnija Od Smrti* (Love Is Colder Than Death) was released in Italy. They live in Ljubljana, the capital of the Yugoslav republic of Slovenia, and make semi-industrial electro dance tracks. Vaguely working the same territory as Chris and Cosey (Throbbing Gristle's pop renegades), Borghesia makes trancelike and repetitive electronic music that owes nothing to the "new age" fuzak movement but quite a bit to modern dance-club sounds. Borghesia uses lots of sequencers played for their harsh, crisp rhythms, and loops of recited dialogue and squirrely synthesizer sounds that can grate like rusty swings or twitter like telemetry from Telstar. Evolution through repetition is their game. It's definitely pop, but though it's danceable, it's hard to imagine anybody actually dancing to it. You can contact Borghesia at Skuc-Forum, Kersnikova 4, 61000 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, or get this record from Jumpy at Diavlerly Productions, Via Molinelli N.19, 40136 Bologna, Italy.

Melodic as a kazoo orchestra with twice the nasal buzz, **CCCP** takes punk forward by returning to its pogo-happy roots in the track "Punk Islam" on the album *Ortodossia II*. A 45-RPM slice of red vinyl, it ranges from alienated

Billy. It was the first rock: a fusion with backwoods (hill)billy country and black blues at its roots. *Psycho Attack Over Europe!* is a compilation of modern rockabilly. From France, Sweden, Holland, Germany, and England, the 'billyboys are out to play their upright basses and shining-smooth guitars. **Rochee and the Sarnos** make rockabilly that's primitive. Their "Crazy Sarno" is a basic garage fest of thin thunks and acoustic clacks sung by a sparse chorus to sound like the oldie "Hand Jive." "Dracu Bop" by France's **Les Wampas** is clean, clear, and pristinely recorded, with French hiccup-style singing. Sweden's **Voodoo Dolls** opt for the swampy psycho end of the '80s 'billy movement with the sinister growled laughter and Crampsy echoes of "Vampire Ville," while Holland's **Batmobile** takes rockabilly to cartoonland in "Slapping Suspenders," a high-speed and high-pitched happy tromp with more clicking rhythms and an almost Hawaiian-sounding steel guitar. At first I thought I had the record at the wrong speed, but my turntable won't play any slower than 33 1/3. *Psycho Attack* is not an album for revivalists, though there are a few tracks of roots-style rockabilly on it. It is a varied, spunky slice of pompadour perkiness from Kix 4 U Records, Bachstraat 6, 2421 TS Nieuwkoop, Holland, who also offer what they describe as "extensive neo- and psycho-catalogs."

Sweden's **Public Vein** would like to visit the olde west, where hoofbeats nyarl under surfbeats and singers warble with a high country edge. Farfisa-style keyboards and fuzz-toned, feedback-encrusted roots guitars are their brand, which they burn under nasally Americanized voices to get a '60s-evoking sound. Sometimes it's the 1860s they're dreaming of. Sometimes it's an Andy Taylor/Mayberry world. The lone whistler who opens "Back on the Highway" could have been lifted from *The Andy Griffith Show* theme, but the song itself is closer to the snaking

undulations of Sunset Strip's Doors. As if seen through a telescopic lens, the Vein's '60s are a mashed mixture, coupling the decade's early traditions with its later heavy sounds. Those who thought the sound of Scandinavia was limited to A-ha and Abba are welcome to check in with Garageland Records, Box 343, S-90107 Umeå, Sweden, for this 7-inch EP.

In Spanish, **La Muerte** means death. In music it means a great and grating hell in which Batman takes acid and the ghost of Nick Cave lies screaming his most subterranean grumbles and rockabilly-edged squeals. *La Muerte* weaves happy, low-notes-only dirges on *Peep Show*, a 12-inch, live-and-studio EP. This is a record of swampabilly, a cross between surf and the darkest, dirtiest gooze. Frankenstein's monster could not grumble deeper than *Muerte's* cancerously growly vocalist, or with more blunt, heavy urgency. You'd have to string a clothesline instead of a guitar to play lower chords. On the backside, Syd Barrett's "Lucifer Sam" gets a surf-a-dige treatment when a psychedelic cloud of electronic birds twitter and squiggly guitars tremble as if it were their last play on earth. *La Muerte's* version blows the original right out of the swamp. That swamp can be found at Soundwork, 95 Rue Van AA, 1050 Brussels, Belgium.

Phill Calvert, who used to be in the Birthday Party, is laying down the beat for **Blue Ruin** now. His big, loping, echo-laden bash keeps Blue Ruin in the Party's traditions on *Such Sweet Thunder*, an album of jazzy and bluesy excursions into rock's roots. Ian "Quinsy" McLean takes Nick Cave's place in the vocal department. He hasn't Cave's pierce-your-eardrum shriek, so he doesn't try to imitate his frenzied side. Instead he concentrates on dark and deep broodings, while Sharon Jessop adds an occasional ghostly background howl. From the sweet and sensuous saxophone of "Waterhole" through bluesman Willie Dixon's composition "Same Thing,"





anguish to dance-dervish joy, full of beely guitar searing through fuzz-edged melodies with adrenalin-overdosed energy. The band itself is Italian. The name is the Soviet spelling of USSR. The language they sing in varies, but that's not really a problem — who can understand rock lyrics anyway? Jingled bells slap rhythmically and the assembled multitudes clap out a beat, merging an undulating Middle Eastern snake charm with pounding rhythms on "Islam." "Mi Ami?" ("Do You Love Me?") could have come from the Buzzcocks' era with its grate, grate, then jangle guitar refrains and the band's harsh but hummable melodies, while "Spara Yuri" ("Shoot, Yuri") has all the isolated alienation and anguish of war in its lonely, echo-laden opening shrieks. Sawing, grating, with a shout of pure angst delivered under the roar of a ripping war jet, "Yuri" bursts with hormones. Make no mistake about it. CCCP is punk. They chant their vocals and have that migraine-inducing drum pulse in lock-sync with groaning bass guitar. You can get them from Jumpy at Diavley Productions, Via Molinelli N. 19, 40136 Bologna, Italy.

Pounding in repetitions like a rockier cousin of a gamelan stuck in overdrive, Strizzi Rizzi's "Bamboo" shrieks with guitar-produced elephant calls and shimmers with intermittent bangles that tinkle like oriental wind chimes on a balmy day. Loud. Noisy. Full of fuzz. "Bamboo" is a hypnotic nod-out with tom-tom clacks and a big, heavy beat — the three members of the band all play percussion. Constantly changing, shifting, and moving, Strizzi Rizzi's *Dressed Up Animals* is an incurably active EP that seems as though it will never wind down. The trio makes alien ethnic music. Robotically sing-song, they sound like a Japanese pop band singing in English when there are lyrics, and have an operatic edge when there aren't. Regula Steiner can sing in joyfully wicked laughs, accompanied by equally giggling cello, and create angel-choir swells with her voice. Karl Löwenherz adds a science-fiction falsetto. On "Love Knows No Secrets," he sings a witch-warble gargle over snakey strings. At times the band's lyrics sound like a learn-English textbook

Robotically sing-song, Strizzi Rizzi sounds like a Japanese pop band singing in English.

gone awry. "Give me that knife," sings Löwenherz. "You want to cut meat?" Steiner intones in response. "What time is it?" he answers. "It's late for you," she says. "I go to the bank," he tells her. "You will sit on it?" she replies, to which he responds, "I was in jailhouse before." Yeah, right, and this music comes from the warehouse of Recommended Records, Magnusstrasse 5, 8004 Zurich, Switzerland.

In an effort to pay homage to the Church of the Fallen Elvis, mighty capitalism, and all the high-class culture exported to their homeland from the wonderful USA, Edmonton,

Canada's Jerry Jerry and the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra created *Road Gore: the Band That Drank Too Much*. A lighthearted and lightheaded foray into the roots of rock. Gore bounces through jukebox country, rockabilly, and blues with a heavy dose of gospel and a witty, loving humor that never goes astray. Nobody wants to admit they're responsible for this record. The drummer calls himself Sparky the Happy Troll. The guitarist goes under the name of Ace Picks, and even the guests won't reveal their identities. You can believe they've got a bassist named Philo Lovejoy, or that they're joined by George Wall of guitar fame. You can even believe the conga player is named Sleepy Holler if you want. Whoever they are, they slosh through an assortment of white-noise waves in the stop-and-start instrumental "Gospel Surfer" and bound through a happy 'billy-based bounce called "Bad Idea." A call-and-response hymn against the evils of socialism, it comes complete with an off-tune parishioner's chorus and cheerleading preacher man. When

Anna Domino preparing to sail into another sensitive, adult ballad.

a booming blues bro' from the heavens intones "God save your soul" as though the Grand Canyon had just found a voice, the Jerry company returns with an adolescently scrawny "Drop dead." Jerry Jerry recycles the tackiest country roots and rockabilly branches with a dignity and affection few bands could achieve. They laugh with, not at, the '50s traditions they mine and record their music with a clean, clear, and simple purity. OG Music, at P.O. Box 182, Station F, Montreal, Quebec H3J 2L1 Canada, brings the Jerry company to vinyl. God save their souls.

If you're in an underground band that has put out a record, I'd like to hear your work. This column is open to musicians and small labels from every country — including the United States. My address is P.O. Box 4904, Panorama City, California 91412.



Hans Nelman



Janiss Gorza

Singles

Bite This!

Column by John Leland

Maybe it's the fallout from the independent promoters' payola scandal, but the airwaves and record companies seem to be recycling their drivel at an alarming rate these days. Aggressive instincts that once went to such worthy ventures as greasing DJs and paying off programmers are now lost on researching licks to steal, as everybody enters a furious race for second. If the circa '78 Moroderisms of Sigue Sigue Sputnik are really the

biggest news in the music industry since the circa '74 Village Peopleisms of Frankie Goes to Hollywood or similar vintage Sylvesterisms of Bronski Beat, then originality might as well leave town with its tail between its legs. And that's enough isms for this month. No earthly larceny, however, can be as dreadful as the so-called English soul revival. If the Blow Monkeys, Fine Young Cannibals, and Simply Red are soul bands, I'm Don Mattingly.

Belinda Carlisle: "Mad About You" (I.R.S.)

Buxom, bouncy Belinda Carlisle grew out of the high-school slumber party that was the Go-Gos and into the shimmering adult world of synthesizers and experience with a bundle of contradictions. "Mad About You" fizzles like Bowie's "Absolute Beginners." It thinks it's a knowing look at adolescent purity, but in its condescension it mistakes simple-mindedness for innocence. Carlisle's sanitized impression of teen luv (unless by some wild turn this is supposed to be adult love) is as sexless as one of the Stepford wives' fantasies. She doesn't sound like she's capable of being mad about anything. With its prefab plastic sequencer construction and Carlisle's bloodless vamping, this song is devoid of nothing so much as lust. Unless you count energy.

Cut Master D.C.: "She's Good to Go" & "Rockin' the House" b/w "Brooklyn's in the House" & "We Came to Rock" (Zakia)

The two great underground rap hits of the winter were Schoolly-D's "P.S.K.—What Does It Mean?" and "Brooklyn's in the House," a celebratory Mantronix rip-off by Cut Master D.C. that offered the choice couplet, "Hey good lookin'/You know you gotta be from Brooklyn." Patently derivative but on point, the song gave articulate voice to the dominant trends of the day. This cost-effective 12-inch reprises "Brooklyn" in an indifferent remix along with three tracks that sit tightly on that Mantronix electro-jones. Over the chilly silicon shufflebeat of "She's Good to Go," D.C. and his uncredited rappers debunk some sexual stereotypes and then build a song around them. Either that or they know a lot of frighteningly horny women. Like "Roxanne, Roxanne," "La-Di-Da-Di," and "Nightmares," another rap about not getting laid. Are the fearless hip-hop men really this scared of sex? The other two new songs are about (what else?) rocking the house, and show off D.C.'s cutmaster prowess. The original "Brooklyn" is the classic, but this 12-inch serves up some pretty amazing stuff.

JFA: "My Movie" (Placebo EP)

Government Issue: "Give Us Stabb or Give Us Death" (Mystic EP)

Each in its own way, these two early hardcore groups prove you don't need to be a speed metal band to be boring. JFA (Jodie Foster's Army) come from Phoenix, run their own label, and dish out an unfocused rocker and two fake Ennio Morricone spaghetti western instrumentals that deliver neither the tunes nor even the riffs that their ponderous acoustic intimations promise. D.C.'s Government Issue, on the other hand, has the riffs and proceeds to give them a proper burial. Without any emotional impact, this is punk more for what it lacks than what it has; at this point, you'll never slay .38 Special just by playing worse songs than

they do. And to think you could be listening to Big Black or Die Kreuzen or Schoolly-D.

Peter Gabriel: "Sledgehammer" (Geffen)

It's hard to believe now that Peter Gabriel ever inflicted all those ungainly progressive sludge tunes on the world or that the highlight of his live shows used to be the Chapman Stick solo. Like Phil Collins, he has updated his wardrobe and is now plundering American black music. Which beats the hell out of Druid folk music, or whatever Genesis used to nick. "I kicked the habit," he sings, "shed my skin / This is the new stuff I go dancing in." On "Sledgehammer," our party animal surrounds himself with horns and female backup singers, in what sounds like a heavyweight, less idiosyncratic analog to Talking Heads' "Slippery People." Lest Gabriel devotees fret, he still isn't exactly weightless in those dancing shoes. "Sledgehammer" lumbers along at a leaden funk crawl, and the lyrics still sound intensely paranoid. He hasn't lost his sledgehammer touch.

Fresh Force Crew: "Rock Me" (Sutra)

Spyder-D (Featuring DJ Doc): "I Can't Wait (to Rock the Mike)" (Profile)

Call this cultural reclamation or derivative opportunism; either way you're wasting big words to describe some pretty simple music. "Rock Me" sets raps over the metallic guitar line to Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus" and the Neanderthal beat from "We Will Rock You." "I Can't Wait" takes apart the Nu Shooz crossover hit of the same name and tries to cross back over again. While the pleasures to be had from these records are circumscribed from the outset, both acts at least picked good songs to work with. "Rock Me" adds balls to the Falco lick and begins strong with a kittenish dub intro, but by the end the Fresh Force Crew is doing "Tequila" (aka "Pee-Wee's Dance"), and I'm totally lost. Nonetheless, a more balanced if not more compelling pop-rock-rap hybrid than Run-D.M.C.'s "Walk This Way." Spyder-D's "I Can't Wait" sounds like the old school; a rap version of an R&B hit. 'Cept in the Sugar Hill days, they always tried to funk up the original. It gets the job done, but that's about it.

Bob Dylan with the Heartbreakers: "Band of the Hand" b/w Michael Rubini: "Theme from Joe's Death" (MCA)

"Down on these streets the fools rule/ There's no freedom or self-respect/A knife's point or a trip to the joint/Is about all you can expect." Dylan's mythological street epic is as far removed from reality as any of his recent music and as stylized as *Miami Vice*. And it's so far off the mark that it almost works. Tom Petty's irredeemably lame Heartbreakers camp up (or, more probably, fake) a sloppy gospel groove. "Band of the Hand" offers 12/8 time and organ and harmonies as a symbol of the apocalypse, and the formula is recognizable enough to work



even in such a perfunctory workout. But Dylan is so obviously intent on painting a sordid scene that he invests his apocalyptic scum with bald affection. Which is where these stylized street epics generally go astray. The record sleeve doesn't tell you, but you also get a sub-Jan Hammer instrumental by Michael Rubini on the B-side. Some things are best left unsaid.

Big Audio Dynamite: "E=MC²" b/w "Albert Einstein Meets the Human Beat Box"

As unsatisfying as the album was, Mick Jones has atoned for most of his sins on his three 12-inch remixes. Rick Rubin scrapped Jones' techno-cuteness and dropped big beats onto both sides of "The Bottom Line" b/w "BAD" 12-inch, and matched his knucklehead minimalism against the dubwise landscaping of Paul "Groucho" Smykle on the A- and B-side remixes of "Medicine Show." This EP included a non-LP collage called "This Is Big Audio Dynamite" that crammed the choicest goods from the album onto a three-minute track, proving a point best left alone. "E=MC²" is a routine remix, but the flip side pulls the song apart and reassembles it around an English human beatbox named Sipo. Since Laswell used Doug E. Fresh on the Sly and Robbie album, I'm surprised more groups haven't added a human beatbox. As much as the Fairlight, it's the instrument of our time. "Einstein" is the closest Jones has come to real dub since *Sandinista!*.

Dhar Braxton: "Jump Back (Set Me Free)" (Sleeping Bag)

A good disco groove is the ideological fulfillment of multitrack technology. Witness this spectacular bit of mindlessness from a newcomer named Dhar Braxton and her producer/procurer Jhon Fair. Like a shoplifter on holiday, Fair appropriates familiar electronic handclaps, synth tweets, and mix effects from all over, including his own production of Chocquette's "It's the East Street Beat," to produce the most irresistible slice of tem-

porary music since the equally derivative "I Can't Wait." I know that covers a pretty short period of time, but so it goes with temporary music. Even if you don't know all the sources and references (I sure don't) this song sounds strikingly unoriginal. It dares you to call it a fraud. But damned if I can think coherently enough when it's on to do so. Fraud or not, this thing moves.

Force M.D.'s: "Here I Go Again" (Tommy Boy)

Juice: "You Can't Hide From Love" b/w "Curiosity" (Def Jam/Columbia)

Since hip hop has engineered the return of the independent black producer, it shouldn't be too surprising that it has also

launched a new breed of vocal group. Full Force, the Force M.D.'s, and Oran "Juice" Jones all lay their voices over strong Spartan accompaniment to give the old pros a run for their money. Luther Vandross should be this bad. "Here I Go Again" is like a vintage Jacksons ballad; not the sort of thing you can outright endorse, but pretty tough to resist. The Force M.D.'s are so much more convincing now that they've accepted themselves as singers rather than rappers; they've shed the New Edition cuteness without losing their charm. Juice betrays his roots when he sings, "You can't front on feelings," but really gives it up on the hip-hop mix of "Curiosity," put together without music by Chuck Chili-Out. And on the straight version, when he lays down the law: "The next time you get curious about Juice, I want you to get curious about getting a job. I want you to get curious about mass transit." This is balladry for b-boys. And if it's more reformist than innovative, that just means that it's the cure.

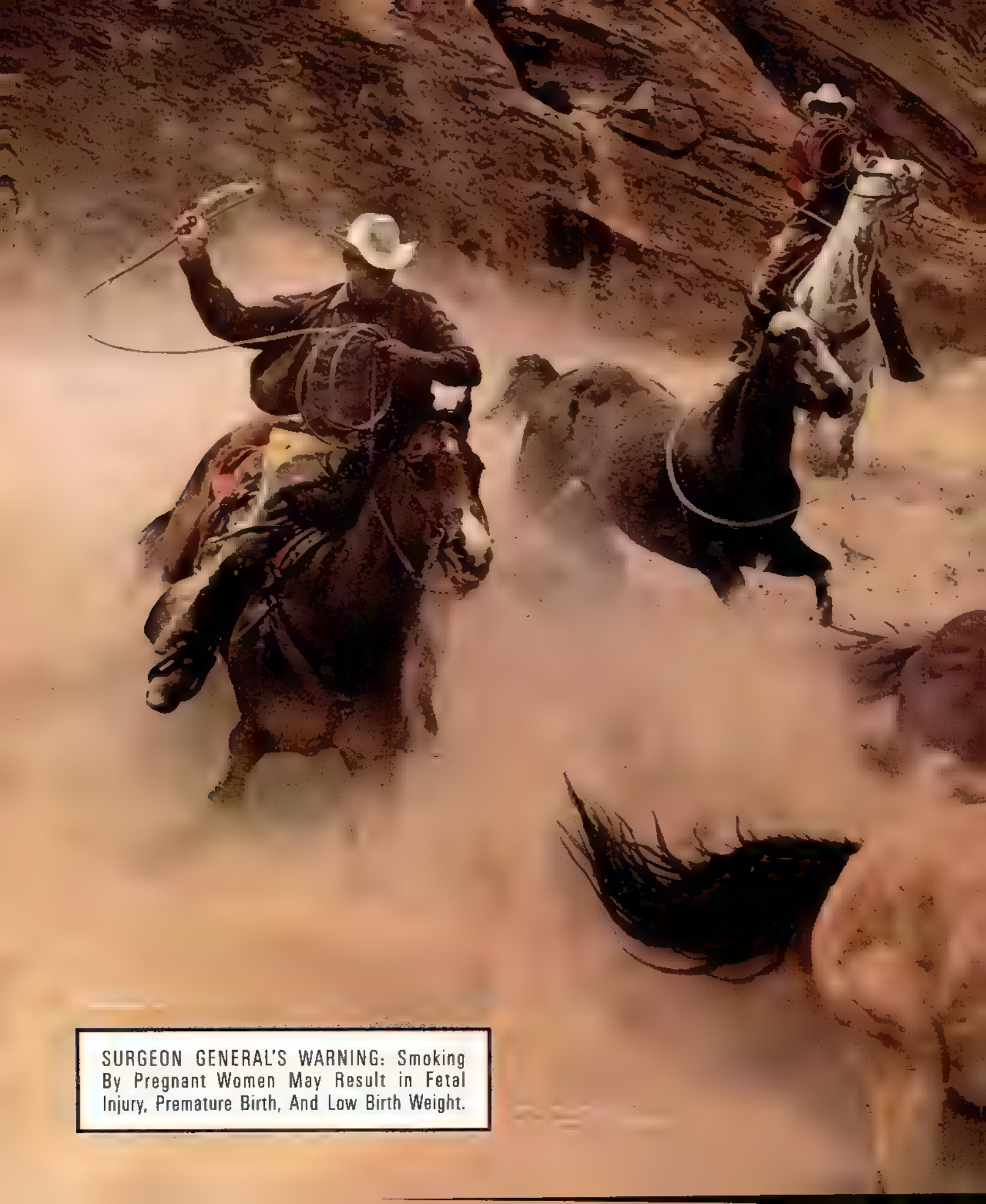
SIDESWIPES

If you can't buy a programmer, you might as well buy a hit, right? Elektra's crack A&R squad spotted Joeski Love's "Pee-Wee's Dance" silliness on its way up the charts, and now one of modern hip hop's pure indie race records (originally released on the Bronx-based Vintertainment label) is out on a major... as is the L.A. Dream Team's "The Dream Team Is in the House," which MCA just sucked up. With its unnecessary synth polish, this is a prime example of West Coast rap. I'll take the New York stuff any day... Massachusetts agitpropers the Proletariat resuscitate their long absent selves and their '78 Anglopunk dogma on "Marketplace" b/w "Death of a

Hedon" (Homestead), a simplistic but sonically compelling art-guitar romp... **Mantronix** remixed the coolly computerized "Bassline" (Sleeping Bag) into a hardcore display of beatbox wizardry. This guy (Mantronix, that is) is so hot right now it's pathetic... the always hopelessly naive **Del-Lords** bring their naïveté to a triumphant head on "Heaven" (EMI America), a rousing call-and-response anthem that's more an exorcism than a delusion. Easily their best song... **Regina**, the ranking industry pick to be the new Madonna, proves that this isn't such a meaningful designation with her laminated "Baby Love" (Atlantic), which comes complete with wallpaper dance arrangement and synthesizer trills. Not the Supremes song, incidentally... her fellow contender **Alisha** runs into the same problems on her follow-up to "Baby Talk," a slow machine product called "Stargazing" (Vanguard), but has a much bigger nose... **M.C. Shan**, Roxanne Shante's writing partner, calls LL Cool J's mother a sleaze-bag slut on "Beat Biter" (Bridge), an answer to LL's "Rock the Bells" that boldly accuses the original of stealing from him. Best is Marley Marl's acrobatic street-scratch production... **Sly Fox**'s "Let's Go All the Way" (Capitol) spreads singing over the beat to the Boogie Boys' "Fly Girl," and on its second time around after a two-year hiatus, scores a big pop crossover hit... the impossibly cool **Fats Comet** express keeps the pressure on with what sounds like an answering machine and beatbox collage on "Rockchester" (World) and a reissue of their monstrous "Stormy Weather" (Upside). No kidding, folks, this is the best dance music now being made... and the **Celebrity Club Featuring Royal Silk** offer the girls' answer to Kurtis Blow on "Girls (Rulin' the World)" (Sutra).

Opposite: Former Go-Go Belinda Carlisle offers her sanitized impression of teen luv. Above: Mick Jones proposes a unified field theory on the remix of Big Audio Dynamite's "E=MC²." Right: Bob Dylan with Tom Petty. Jimmy's latest single is so far removed from reality that it almost works.





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BACK TO ZERO

The demise of the Rolling Stones may be attributable to one simple fact: the baddest, oldest rock 'n' roll band in the world has run out of reasons for staying together.

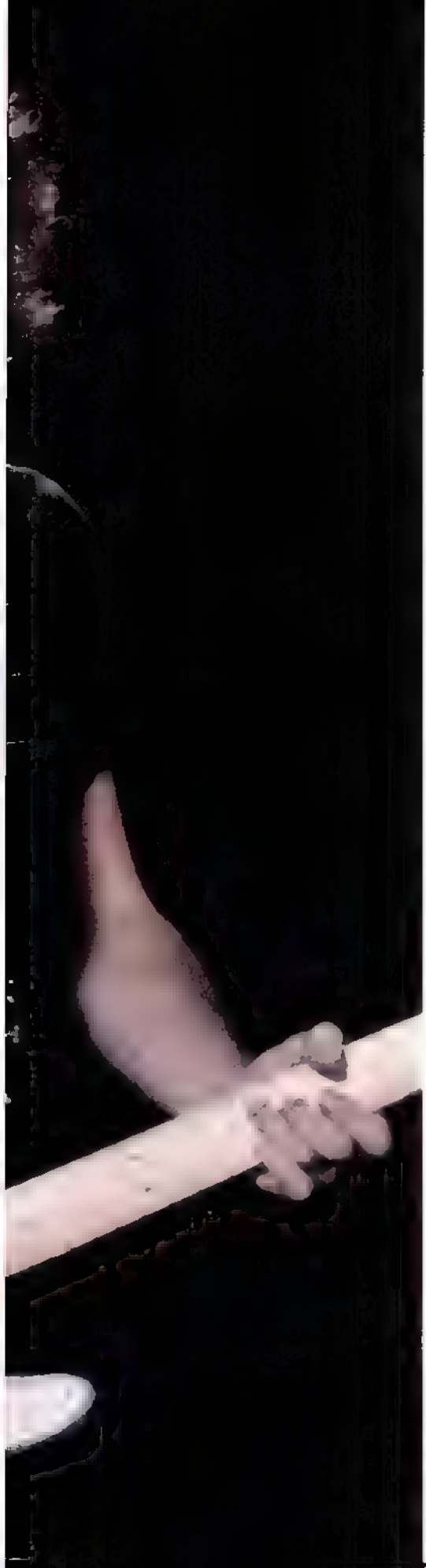
Article by Nick Kent

"You know they're congratulating the Stones on being together 112 years. Whoopee! At least Charlie's still got his family. In the '80s they'll be asking: 'Why are these guys still together? Can't they hack it on their own? Why do they have to be surrounded by a gang? Is the little leader frightened someone's gonna knife him in the back?' That's gonna be the question. They're gonna look at the Beatles and Stones and all those guys as relics. . . . They'll be showing pictures of the guy with lipstick wriggling his ass and the four guys with the evil black makeup on their eyes trying to look raunchy. That's gonna be the joke in the future."

—John Lennon, (*Playboy*) September, 1980

Initially, it seemed much like any other time when the Rolling Stones had released a new album. In late February the publicity machine was stoked into action with the release of "Harlem Shuffle," the Bob and Earl classic that took Keith Richards "five years and two takes to get Mick to sing," and the first single from the new Stones album. The Stones' London publicist was offering various publications only Jagger interviews to promote the album; Keith Richards had done enough interviews, it was felt. Though the Stones were still shaken by the recent death of Ian Stewart, the band's longstanding keyboard player, often known as "the sixth Stone," the last week of February seemed to brim with expectations regarding their future, not only as a recording outfit but also as a live group. On the 23rd they played to a select





audience—mostly friends and family of Ian Stewart—at London's 100 Club, and there was talk of the group appearing live on *Top of the Pops*, the BBC's weekly pop show, to promote "Harlem Shuffle." But it didn't happen. Instead, there came the silence.

Richards laid low at the London home of Steve Lillywhite, producer of *Dirty Work*, then flew off to Barbados for a brief vacation. Jagger left for the Caribbean island of Antigua, planning to return at the same time as Richards to participate in a promotional press blitz for the new album. However, about a week before Jagger's expected return, the telephone at the Stones' publicity office was disconnected.

During this imposed news blackout Jagger first told other Stones members that he would not tour in support of the album, though it would be central to the success of the LP, and, after a five-year absence from the stage, provide a necessary shot of vitality for the old Trojans. It left CBS, the band's record company, having shelled out a rumored \$25 million for them, more than slightly miffed.

Yet Jagger didn't seem to care. Behind the scenes during the making of *Dirty Work*, there had been intense disputes, feuds, and tensions that left all the Stones devastated and perhaps destroyed the spirit of the group. Jagger had not been at the helm during the making of *Dirty Work*, preferring to concentrate on promoting his solo album, *She's the Boss*. Reportedly, he had hardly been around long enough to take off his coat during the final sessions. The reason was the growing antipathy between himself and Richards. While receiving a special Grammy for "Lifetime Achievement," it had appeared that he not only wanted to disassociate himself from the crass ceremony but from the 23 years he'd spent as joint-leader of the Stones. The next day, before boarding his flight to Antigua, he wouldn't discuss the band at all. Asked how it felt receiving the Grammy, he muttered sullenly that all trophies were nothing but "empty baubles."

It has become typical of the Stones' perversity that their feuds, grievances, and rivalries are aired in public to a fanfare of media speculation that each album or tour really will be the last. Similarly, the tensions that exist between Jagger and Richards have never been matters of the highest discretion. "We were born brothers by different parents," Jagger has often stated, the implication being that the ties binding the two would always outweigh the bouts of petty bitching that have taken place over the years.

Throughout the '70s, Jagger's public behavior often caused Richards to spout venom—the socialite nonsense he was drawn into while married to Bianca, the tiresomely gauche and camp mannerisms that always threatened to turn the mid-'70s live act into a shabby burlesque. Yet at the same time, Richards spent most of the decade proving himself a liability to work with. His hard-core heroin habit forced Jagger to take the leadership of the group and direct their career strategies—and, above all, to keep Richards from slipping back into his traditional musical values.

To Jagger's credit, he chose not to publicly belittle his partner with the same degree of fury to which Richards has often resorted when discussing him. Instead, Jagger would usually chuckle and affectionately roll his eyes when Richards's shortcomings were mentioned. Keith rarely reciprocated this generosity. When Richards, after almost a decade of reckless behavior, finally conquered his heroin addiction—by consuming nearly lethal quantities of alcohol—the two were even more at loggerheads.

The tensions between Mick and Keith spilled out

The feud between Mick and Keith openly raged on the last tour, until they were barely speaking.

Keith flew back to London, furious and threatening to "slit Jagger's throat" if he carried out a plan to tour on his own.

often during the phenomenally successful 1981 tour of America (still considered the greatest financial success of any music event) and the modified version which crisscrossed Europe in 1982. The addition of Chuck Leavell on keyboards and a powerful horn section had bolstered the Stones' often shambolic live sound, and Jagger's voice had improved immeasurably, drawing compliments even from Keith Richards: "He used to come out leaping about and after 20 minutes he'd be too winded to really sing," he told me. "Now he's learnt not only how to pace himself, but his voice is so much stronger. The fucker's actually singin', man! I can't believe it, but there it is..."

It was evident, however, that the group's newly-found edge sprung not from unity but from mutual antipathy. Typical again of the Stones' famed perversity: they were playing better than ever at the moment when they were most falling apart.

The most obvious example of this was Ron Wood. At one time, Woody had seemed the very essence of buoyancy—certainly, he'd seen his share of destructive influences, but he hadn't appeared to be unduly swayed by them. He was energetic, enthusiastic, pliable—the perfect foil for a group whose members by the mid-'70s had very little in common. Celebrating the last days of 1975, a year that had seen him perform with both the Stones and the Faces, Wood had stated: "I think the Stones bring out the best in me." But seven years later, touring Europe, Ronnie Wood seemed lost.

From most accounts it wasn't the Stones so much as the Los Angeles celebrity life that took Wood from a state of enchantment to one of entrapment. In 1980, Wood and his companion (now wife) Jo Karslake were arrested with 260 grams of cocaine on the Caribbean island of St Maarten. Jailed for five days before being allowed to return to L.A., Wood continued on his haphazard way. A year later, during rehearsals at Longview Farm, Massachusetts, several reporters noticed that both Richards and Jagger had little to do with Wood. During an interview, Richards, clearly disgusted by Wood's intemperate behavior, fixed him with a withering glance. "Just disappear!" he ordered, and Wood promptly obeyed. Turning back to the journalist, Richards remarked caustically: "That's one boy who's not got much longer the way he's going."

During the tour's London stopover, while Jagger, Richards, Watts, and Wyman—not to mention other band members—were sequestered in a hotel in London's Knightsbridge district, Wood was "elsewhere"—holed up in an apartment. Several excuses were proffered, but the main reason was a clause that Jagger had placed very high up in the Stones' official tour contract that read, "If anyone is found in possession of drugs in any part of the backstage area, that person will be immediately banished from the vicinity, whatever their capacity."

Vexed at Wood's inability to control his problems, the Stones put him on an allowance during the tour in order to prevent him from buying drugs. But Jagger wanted him out of the band altogether and, wherever possible, forced him to stay in different quarters from the rest of the group—even the roadies. According to insiders, George Thorogood, a support act on many European dates, was secretly rehearsing to take Wood's place.

On June 26, at the second of two victorious homecoming bonanzas performed before more than 70,000 fans in London's Wembley Arena, there was

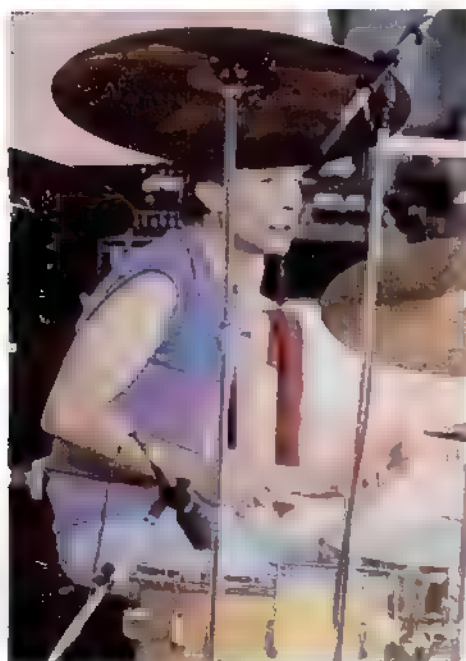
a more telling incident at the beginning of "She's So Cold." As the song started, Richards forgot its central riff. Immediately, he tossed his guitar aside and leaped on Watt's drum riser, his whole body conducting the rhythm. Charlie was there like a shot, as was Wyman, right on cue with the song's brawny bass line. Richards then spun round to hear what he expected would be Wood covering for him. But Wood wasn't there. He seemed momentarily oblivious, a cigarette in his mouth and his eyes closed. Richards leaped off the platform and drove his fist into Wood's face—so hard that Wood almost tumbled offstage.

The differences between Jagger and Richards on that tour, though not so forcibly expressed, ran even deeper. Onstage Jagger would try to unnerve Richards, whose rhythm guitar set the pace for the 26-song set, by hurrying things along. Keith would glare back, methodically changing his guitar until he was ready to begin. During Richards's one number, "Little T&A," Jagger was forced to vacate the stage. It was written in the contract. The symbolic high point of this rift came in one show during a version of "Time Is on My Side"—originally recorded in 1964 and the Stones' first US hit. Evidently ill at ease with this bygone era, Jagger donned an absurd outfit and minced around the stage, a purse hanging from an exaggeratedly limp wrist. Richards fixed him with a withering glare before manfully striding to the mike stand for the vocal duet.

At another show, in Scandinavia, Richards deliberately hijacked the hydraulic platform used to lift Jagger over the crowd during (ironically) "You Can't Always Get What You Want," and performed a 20-minute guitar solo. Furious, Jagger dispatched Wood to try and persuade Richards down, but Richards refused and, according to the tour photographer, "Woody narrowly avoided getting booted for his role as go-between."

Meanwhile, petty intrigues raged. Offstage, Jagger and Richards barely spoke. Each maintained his own private entourage, and communicated with the other through them, or via the press. Indeed, it became typical that they would vent their feelings

While the other Stones were crumbling, Charlie Watts's life was stable—then it fell apart.



Michael Putland/Reino Ltd.

During one show, when Ron was out of synch, Keith leaped off a platform and drove his fist into Wood's face, nearly knocking him off the stage.



Garry Greenhalgh/Reino Ltd.

within a journalist's earshot. On one occasion, before a hotel room packed with press people, Richards responded to a musician's complaint about Jagger by loudly announcing, "Yes, that's a fair example of the kind of cunt I've got to deal with."

Nevertheless, for Keith Richards the Rolling Stones remain the perfect vehicle. Last October, he talked excitedly about how the band had never sounded better, how they were "at this point where we can make this thing—rock 'n' roll—grow up. We're the only ones who've kept it together this long. Is there a point in being a rock 'n' roll band after 20 odd years? Can we make it grow up gracefully? Can we get it to mature and make sense? I love doing this, and we're at a point now where we'd like to make it grow with us."

Despite Richards's vision, there was a virtual range war between the two Glimmer Twins over Jagger's solo album, *She's the Boss*. Jagger went all out to sell his record, employing Julien Temple to direct a 30-minute video utilizing several of the songs. He relentlessly wooed the media, gaining maximum publicity for the album's initial exposure. Yet its release in early April was a minor event. It wasn't so much that it was a terrible record, just that in no sense was it that different from the kind of padding that had filled makeweight Stones albums such as *Emotional Rescue* or *Goat's Head Soup*. The first single, "Just Another Night," made the No. 9 spot on the US hot 100 before quickly vanishing. The album didn't reach the Top 10 at all. Richards finally vented his spleen in late October.

"I thought the timing was very strange, bringing out something like that, an obviously commercial album, just before we were starting work on the new Stones album," he said. "I mean, if he'd done his favorite Irish folk songs with a lady harpist... or have Liberace accompany him on Frank Sinatra songs, whatever. Something you couldn't possibly do with the Stones—that would've been fine. To my mind a Mick Jagger album should have been a gi-normous event, not just another record. I told him it was dumb timing and not an inspired piece of work."

This ill-feeling festered through the *Dirty Work* sessions, which had begun in Paris in January '85 without Jagger. When he joined the group in March, Richards was furious that Jagger had virtually no original material to contribute, having used it all up on his solo record. Jagger, in turn, was riled by Richards's seizing the band's leadership in his absence. The most public example of this growing rift came in July, with Live Aid. With every old stadium supergroup reuniting for this one-off occasion, only the Rolling Stones reacted in an

Typical of their perversity, the Stones were playing best when they were getting along the worst.

exactly opposite way. Having put himself forward to Bob Geldof independent of the other Stones (and without even consulting them), Jagger invested a lot of time and credibility in the show. He saw it pay off in spades: his duet with David Bowie on "Dancing in the Streets" hit No. 1 all over the world, and his 25 minutes on stage, peaking with a Tina Turner duet, made for exhilarating entertainment. Conversely, the Bob Dylan-Keith Richards-Ron Wood trio—which Richards had devised to top Jagger's performance—turned into an incomprehensible shambles, with rock's (supposedly) greatest rhythm guitarist playing lame, pointless accompaniment to songs that simply hadn't been rehearsed; never mind arranged.

As the *Dirty Work* sessions proceeded, it became clear that the Rolling Stones—once a symbol of self-contained autonomy—were no longer functioning as a band. So the album is arguably a Rolling Stones album. Bill Wyman plays bass on only half of the album, while Charlie Watts apparently became so vexed at one point in the sessions that he walked out and flew back to England. The album's real backbone—in addition to the several heavyweight session players "thanked" on the sleeve credits—was the implausibly named Biff Hitler Trio, a loose assemblage of roadies, friends, and hired hands whom Richards and Wood enlisted in the absence of the regular members.

Ron Wood's substantial involvement in the record was largely due to Richards. Wood's personal problems had come to a head in 1984, when Jagger persuaded him to enter a detoxification center somewhere in England. (A journalist who tracked him down there got Wood to come clean about his \$5,000-a-day freebasing habit). However, Wood only spent three weeks in the place before checking out claiming he was cured.

Richards, according to producer Steve Lillywhite, "helped Ronnie kick the freebase thing" by involving him in a constant routine of rehearsal for the album. If Richards had other motives for involving Wood so heavily, one might have been Jagger's less than secret loss of respect for Wood. Furthermore, Richards, disgusted by Jagger's decision to take sole writing credit for most of the songs on *She's the Boss*, thus breaking the hallowed Jagger-Richards credit of time immemorial, was determined that at least half the songs on *Dirty Work* would be credited to Jagger-Richards-Wood. (Only "Lonely at the Top" received Jagger-Richards credit,



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simply because the song was from the *Some Girls* sessions of 1977.)

When at least one other producer refused the job, Lillywhite decided that he would take on producing *Dirty Work*. Contacted about it, he seemed uneasy. "I... it's strange, 'cause I usually like to talk about an album I've just made, but with this, I just feel as though I don't want to say so much. It is Keith's album to a great extent. I mean, he wrote those songs because of Mick's solo commitments."

Keith began referring to Jagger less-than-affectionately as "Brenda." In Jagger's absence Bobby Womack and legendary R&B singer Don Covay sang guide lyrics on the new tunes. There were stories that things got so intolerable between Richards and Jagger upon Mick's arrival that the two moved into different studios.

Dirty Work was finally released the last week of March. The dead response from the phone at the Stones office prompted me to pay a visit to find out what was going on. Walking down Bond Street towards the office, I walked straight into Charlie Watts.

"Where are you off to then?" he asked. "Our publicists? Forget 'em, they're bloody useless."

In the past year, Watts—the sweetest, most ego-less Stone—has, perversely, been its most publicity ravaged. First back in March 1985, his daughter's expulsion (for drugs) from one of Britain's most expensive private schools had been trumpeted in banner headlines. Then, in early December, the Watts—the one family to have weathered the Rolling Stones' progress without a break-up of any sort—were further ravaged by press revelations of Charlie's wife, Shirley, being admitted to a clinic specializing in alcoholism treatment. Scarcely a week later, the phone rang and informed Watts of Ian Stewart's sudden death.

Though "Stu" had contributed little to *Dirty Work*—he had found the sessions onerous and confessed to friends that he couldn't wait to get out—he and Watts remained especially close.

Stewart's death had a profound effect on all the Stones, weakening the already flimsy thread that held them together. Now, four months later, Watts still seemed in shock. We talked for some while, but whenever conversation turned to the band he appeared uninterested, as though he'd rather discuss his big band, or cricket, or the latest Sheepdog Trials (his other two abiding interests). I sensed that for Watts the Stones were already a past issue, a matter of history. He wasn't even aware that *Dirty Work* had been released. "Does it sound good, then?" he asked casually.

Pressed about the future of the Stones, all Watts would say with some sadness, is "The touring... I can't imagine it. I always have this image of me when playing in the Stones, and there are all these 16-year-old girls in the front screaming. My daughter's that age. I find it embarrassing."

On the other hand, Richards sees this as the challenge that the Stones can—or at least could have—transcended. He is particularly fond of citing Muddy Waters's first electric blues band. But Mick Jagger isn't Muddy Waters, and he knows it. He claims not to really like any white rock that much ("white bands get the accents all wrong") and listens almost exclusively to black music.

Five years ago he still made it his business to keep in touch with everything going on: he'd read all the music press, check out the new bands, constantly keep in touch. Now he seems weary of having to resurrect the Stones for another tour. Clearly, Richards's maneuvers at the helm of *Dirty Work*'s creation made Jagger query the point of still being a duly committed Stone. Jagger desires to keep up the veneer of being a Rolling Stone but wonders if that is really what his life needs. Richards wants and needs the Stones badly. Bill Wyman at 50 is dating a

It was written into the tour contract that when Keith sang his number, Mick had to vacate the stage.

model who at 17 is young enough to be his granddaughter. "She keeps me young," maintains Wyman. He and Ron Wood want to tour; the latest quotes that the Stones could earn \$40 million for one American tour is obviously an incentive. Charlie Watts meantime sits on the fence; he'll probably join up if Jagger finally agrees.

In the second week of May, Keith Richards was furious. He flew back to London having read an article in *Musician* magazine that had him threatening, nay promising, to "slit Jagger's throat" if the singer left the Stones, as he had told *Musician* he would, and set up a tour of his own this year (numerous American "confidants" stated throughout the article that this could indeed happen). On May 25, Richards, nixing all interviews, appeared on "My Top Ten," an hour-long BBC radio program.

He sounded unsteady. "Uh... I don't think we'll be touring this year, although nothing is carved in stone, pardon me (mild smirk, quickly stifled). I've, uh, no doubt we will tour again... yeah... it's just that this year the timing has been a little... uncoordinated, y'know. We'll just give it a rest this summer. Maybe later this year." He paused before whispering sadly, "I don't know, man. Stu's death was the main reason this time around."

"It's difficult to do anything at the moment, let alone tour. I was talking to Charlie the other day and he's still waiting for Stu to come bouncing through the door. It hasn't sunk in all the way yet. We're all so used to seeing him then not seeing him for a few months that it just feels like a gap right now. I guess we'll have to get used to it eventually. For the band it was a big wallop and as I say, we're still in semi-shock."

Richards stressed the need for the Stones to live "for the present and the future, not in the past. I've always thought of musicians as antennae rather than creators. If you're around and switched on, it'll come out in what you do eventually. For us, the Rolling Stones are still looking for the Rolling Stones."

Last October, when asked whether he was considered the Stones' musical director, Richards said, "If I said that, I'd be sacked." In May, he was more tentative, "I guess my role is one of the y'know (he mimicks American showbiz patter), 'Come on, you guys, lets go.' I don't think I'm a taskmaster, but I know a bunch of people who do (smirks). If I watched myself, I know I'd probably cringe and just think, 'Oh God, not again, look at him go. Crack that whip, boy... but as long as the others are still up for it... I'll work 'em till they drop. But I'll drop with 'em.'"

A couple of days later, Richards was in a recording studio adding his guitar to a session by an unknown and unsigned group called the Dirty Strangers. The band, all in their mid-20s, play raucous mongrel R&B in a pale, pale imitation of their main inspiration, the Rolling Stones. But Richards didn't seem to care. He tuned the strings down to his famous G-modal tuning and cranked out the same old leathery licks he's been locked into for the last 20 years. The sound is unmistakable. It has its virtues and its limitations. It is just as the Rolling Stones were. Perhaps this is the way all old rockers go after their peak years: they're outpedalling who they are rather than what they do.

Mick Jagger would appear to know this, and for a



Bill Wyman (left) was dating a girl young enough to be his granddaughter, and Ron Wood struggled with an out-of-control drug habit.

man still harboring unfulfilled artistic ambitions it cannot be a pleasing prospect. He may not have time on his side, but he still has stealth. Continuing with the Stones, getting stiff on his legend... these just don't seem to be in Jagger's master plan.

In 1985, he realized one of his few remaining ambitions—the birth of a son, a male heir to the Jagger dynasty. More and more, one senses, it provided the impetus to force him toward fulfilling his other, oft-stated desire: to step out from the Rolling Stones while they're still ahead. Yes, it does hurt. A world without the Rolling Stones will be strange.

EPILOGUE

Keith Richards was, at press time, aboard the QE2, bound for New York. His wife, Patti, is expecting a baby in July, and complications made her unable to fly. Before leaving London, Richards denied rumors that he would be performing in any band other than the Rolling Stones. He also flatly denied any plans for a solo album. His one concrete plan for the future is to produce a film of the life of Robert Johnson, the early American blues musician. In conversation, he never once referred to Mick Jagger by name.

Charlie Watts is pursuing his big band project.

Bill Wyman has griped to the press regarding the amount of money Jagger denied him by not touring. He plans to go to his house in the south of France to pursue "personal projects." Meanwhile, he has earned a dubious reputation as a comic straight man by appearing on the *Benny Hill Show* and several other British family entertainment programs. He has become the Stone who will do anything.

Ron Wood is in rehearsal with Rod Stewart for what is being touted as a one-off Faces reunion in aid of multiple sclerosis victims. John Taylor of Duran Duran will play bass in the band.

Mick Jagger began shooting a movie, co-starring with Maximilian Schell, before dropping out with complaints of stomach cramps. He is planning to star in a movie with David Bowie and is currently looking for a producer for his second solo album.



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This is Mom's Place, a combination Jamaican restaurant/car service/pool hall on Hollis Avenue and 200th Street in Hollis, Queens, the middle-class black neighborhood where the three members of Run-D.M.C. grew up. On a cold, rainy Tuesday night, a couple dozen neighborhood teenagers and slightly older folks have gravitated from the sidewalk in front of a Chinese take-out place down the block and into Mom's. Brown paper sacks holding 40 dogs (40-ounce bottles of Olde English Malt Liquor) circulate, and the sweetish chemical smell of crack cuts through the damp air. A jukebox blares the Temps' "Just My Imagination" over the shrill beeps from the video game, as someone sings along, off-key: "Of all the skeezers in New York..." Mom surveys the crowd with a look you could use to cut glass.

"Yo, turn us on to the box. We need two skeezers. I'm a single-minded man with a plural. Yo, where the

"Are you down with the Beastie Boys?"

This is the Hollis crew, the people who remember when Run and D.M.C. were 15 and part of the Magnificent Super Seven, rapping in Hollis Park in checkered blazers. Back in the di-days, the people who gathered around Jay when he cut up Queen's "We Will Rock You" and Billy Squier's "Big Beat" on the biggest sound system in the neighborhood included: Butter Love, formerly Dougie Bee of the Magnificent Super Seven, now part of the rap group called the Hollis Crew; Runnie Ray, with his ghetto blaster wrapped in plastic against the rain; Cool Tee, a Super Seven alumnus; stocky, nappy-haired Country; Shane, who compares Cadillacs with D.M.C.; Daryl Woods, an almost skin-headed guy in a varsity jacket who put laces into Jay's Adidas; barrel-chested Jocko in a gray down jacket and a gray Adidas ski hat.

"We made Run-D.M.C. what they are," says a childlike 17-year-old named Lamont, or Little L. "We go to all their jams and we boost them and get the

today: Run, in a black Def Jam baseball jacket, black Adidas pants with the string hanging out, and beige Kangol hat; D.M.C., in a furry blue Kangol, fur-trimmed snorkel parka, blue Adidas warm-up top, unfaded blue Levis, and his trademark black-framed glasses; and Jay, shooting pool with Country, in a nylon Fila hooded warm-up top, black denim Levis, and the first example of hip-hop merchandising, a black Kangol with the Run-D.M.C. logo.

Run-D.M.C. are on edge tonight. As they shoot the shit and swill 40s at Mom's, they are waiting for their third album, *Raising Hell*, to hit the racks. It will either break them out to a huge new audience or signal that they've gone as far as they can. They know that they've got a motherfucker in the can. But they also know that rap careers tend to be meteoric, then collapse. Their last album, the weakly meandering *King of Rock*, raised some doubts that only two strong non-LP singles could erase. And they know that LL Cool J, dishing out the best of their old hard b-boy sound, is more than

The crown rests uneasily on the heads of the princes of rap,
but maybe not for long.

HELL RAISIN'

Article by John Leland

skeezers be hanging out at?"

"You think you made up skeezers? Like Jonah said to the whale, I ain't swallowing that."

"Can I get some sidewalk here?"

"You gonna get the next 40, Jay? Jay! Jay!"

"Yo, I just heard your new album."

"What did you think? You know it's a winning album. Either that or leave Hollis now. You can't front on my album. You know it's the best shit. You don't like 'My Adidas'? You don't like 'Peter Piper'? You don't like 'Hit II Run'?"

"You liked it, but you liked it in your mouth."

"Run" (Joe Simmons), "D.M.C." (Darryl McDaniels), "Jam-Master Jay" (Jason Mizell), and I had been sitting in Jay's 1986 black Lincoln for about 20 minutes, discussing whether Mom would let me in. There'd been a problem with a white guy before. But D.M.C. didn't want to go bowling, and on a Tuesday night in Hollis there isn't a hell of a lot else to do. So here we are. No problems. Everyone seems to think I'm someone else.

"Yo, Danny! ... You're not Danny? I'm gonna call you Danny anyway."

Run explains: MC Danny White Boy. The only white guy in Hollis.

crowd pumping. Get the girls motivated. You know, we're the party motivators. Run used to hang out with my cousin, so they used to be at the house a lot. He used to come with a book of rhymes. This was back in the days. And Darryl, he used to be battling my cousin, drawing Bruce Lee pictures."

Everybody has a story: about boxing with D.M.C. using nine pairs of socks for gloves, about how Run's going to give them their big break. "This guy's the best rapper around here," says Run, pointing to Romeo, a handsome, caramel-complexioned youth with a transparent mustache and leather gaucho hat. "We'll go outside and jam." And in the cold rain, Run spits, lip farts, and otherwise human beatboxes while Romeo reels off a sly string of rhymes. Jay comes out to join in, and picks the jam way up with a counter rhythm.

"They don't forget nobody," adds Leslie, a 16-year-old with light brown braids and a bright gold front tooth. "They play ball in the park. And then the thing is, they say what's true. It's a rap, but it's the truth, and it's all about life. You gotta be around it, and everything's out here."

The crew is all here, and scattered among them is the most powerful group playing any genre of music

ready to push them aside. *King of Rock* sold better than 800,000 copies, but that was only a slight improvement over the sales of their debut album, despite heavy MTV exposure. All three members believe that the rock route was a mistake. This album could be their last chance.

"Everybody is looking for us to go downhill now," says Jay. "Everybody's praying and planning for our downfall. If we come with another weak album, we could be over with. Know what I'm saying? So we went to work. A couple of people say, 'Hey, you know if you come weak this time, I'll just be happy to step up.' I ain't going to say no names. Like when Run's lung collapsed (in December), I know a lot of rappers who was real happy. There were people who actually talked about it. That's real fucked up. Some people think if Run-D.M.C. is out of the race, it's easy to go for yours out there."

"Myself," says Run, "I'm not interested in reaching a giant audience. I could sell a million and be happy every time. I like the b-boys that I know to buy records."

Putting their heads together are (clockwise from left) Run, Jam-Master Jay, and D.M.C.

I don't want to go stretching my neck out to go find a rock crowd or whatever, trying to sell 50 million, cause I don't even really understand that too much. I only know how to make what I know how to make. If there's a million b-boys that buy that type of record, I'm straight. I'm not really trying to catch that Live Aid crowd or whatever."

Despite their boasts and middle-brow moralizing, Run-D.M.C.'s lyrics have always been strikingly, powerfully banal autobiography. Cold, stark pedestrianism, as if any deviation from the straight and narrow were a step toward damnation. They rap about their friends, their glasses, about taking airplane flights at huge heights. On the Aerosmith collaboration, "Walk This Way," their clumsy fumbling with Steve Tyler's jaded lyrics drives home just how unsexual the group is. They've always been more about slicing away the bullshit than expanding a vision.

Drug rumors follow the band, and they probably aren't as straight as they play it. But they really are victoriously mundane, directed guys. Family men.

Their money is in their cars: Jay's Lincoln, D.M.C.'s Cadillac Fleetwood, Run's Buick Riviera, all 1986, all black. Run wants to trade his in for a Jaguar; D.M.C. wants to give his to his father and buy a van with a water bed in the back. But there are plenty of Caddies in Hollis, and the three seem otherwise no different from the rest of the people at Mom's. "I gave my moms a lot of money," says Jay. "Fixed up my basement. Couple of color TVs, couple of VHSs, little bit of jewelry, some gold. Santa Claus at Christmas. Few thousand in the bank."

D.M.C.: "I had a dream last night I was in a Datsun 280-Z, came out my house, and the cops just started chasing me and shit. And I went up on the sidewalk and shit. I said, this shit is def. I woke up, I was so happy."

Run: "I dreamed we was in a fucking Datsun 280-Z, too. And the cops came up to us and Jay went through the light. And we said something to 'em, and one cop said, 'I don't give a fuck what you do.' It was a black cop, man. You know about wild dreams, man?"

Run is trying to make a point here. "Note that," he says, as two more members of the Hollis crew make their way into Mom's. Daryl Woods hugs each of them and wrestles him to the ground. Is this the usual Hollis greeting? "No," he says. "That's they own dumb shit." Run keeps asking me about the new album. "You like 'You Be Illin' a lot, though? That's the deffest shit. 'You Be Illin' is def, Jay. You think the record '[My] Adidas' is going to do good, all the little kids are going to like it and everybody? What do you think of '[It's] Tricky?'" A penny falls to the floor. "Waste not," screams Daryl Woods, slapping his huge palm over it, "want not." Run and D.M.C., fortified by Olde English, break into an impromptu version of "Hit It Run," with Run sputtering a beat behind D.M.C.'s raps. "Everybody likes that beatbox shit," he says. "Bugs everybody the fuck out. Lets motherfuckers know what time it is."

After their unsuccessful flirtation with musicality on *King of Rock*, Run-D.M.C. have returned to their roots. They ditched producer Larry Smith (he still makes great pop records with Whodini) and produced most of *Raising Hell* themselves in a street style. Despite the cover version of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way," the album is almost exclusively hard b-boy

jams, with little or no music. Just beats and rhymes—the style that they invented in 1983 with "Sucker M.C.'s," the B-side of their first single, and turned into the dominant form in hip hop. The shit that put them on top in the first place.

"Before us," says Jay, "rap records was corny. Everything was soft. Nobody made no hard beat records. Everybody just wanted to sing, but they didn't know how to sing, so they'll just rap on the record. There was no real meaning to a rapper. Bam(baataa) and

"Before us," says Jay, "rap records was corny. Everything was soft."



George Dubose

them was getting weak. Flash was getting weak. Everybody was telling me it was a fad. And before Run-D.M.C. came along, rap music could have been a fad."

"None of them was hard-hitting street jams," says Run. "We came and got ill. There it is."

"There was never a b-boy record made until we made 'Sucker M.C.'s,'" Jay continues. "Now you got groups that just try to be all b-boy. Rappers wasn't even street before we came out at all. Rappers used to dress up, leather this, leather that, chains. Did you ever see them back in the days? Motorcycle-gang-looking people. When we came in, we dressed the way we always dressed, and we just did our thing. We was street. We was hard. When people seen us, they seen that we was regular, normal people. Didn't go around with no braids in our hair, flicking them around. People tend to like what's real. And we was real."

"'Sucker M.C.'s,' 'Jam-Master Jay,' those records

Run-D.M.C. demonstrating the simple sartorial splendor that has made them Kings of Rock.

were trendsetting records. People based their whole lives on the way we looked. Even LL Cool J used to wear boots when he started rapping. His image wasn't Kangol and rough and all that. He got that from us. We told him, 'If you're going to be from around our way, you can't be like that.'"

You're a five dollar boy and I'm a million dollar man

You're a sucker M.C., and you're my fan.

You're tryna bite lines or rhymes of mine

You're a sucker M.C. in a pair of Calvin Kleins

—from "Sucker M.C.'s"

Run: "I had a dream last night I gave my girl a car, but she didn't want it. She wanted to paint it. But it turned into a barbecue grill that could make French fries and everything. How 'bout a car that could make French fries?"

D.M.C.: "I had a crazy dream I was on the road with Michael Jackson. We went into a room, and we didn't have to be at the show till five or something, and there was three Chinese girls in there tending to all my needs; it was real crazy, ironing my clothes. I went and took a shower, and I'm in the shower naked, and in the dream someone said, 'Someone's coming, someone's coming.' And I couldn't see the face, but someone came in there with a knife. And it was like, what's that movie? *Alfred Hitchcock*. *Psycho*. And then I just woke myself up. Word."

Everybody's trying to call us the second generation of rap," says Jay. "But we was doing it back in the days. We just wasn't televised. Run was out there. Before the Sugar Hill Gang made 'Rapper's Delight,' I was scratching already. I was about 15 by that time, so I been scratching."

You can neatly divide rap history at Run-D.M.C.'s first single, "Sucker M.C.'s." It was as radical and influential a record as "Anarchy in the UK." With "The Message," Sugar Hill abandoned the dominant production machine in rap music, and the label's house band left. The artists who built the music from a Bronx subculture to a national phenomenon were suddenly hurled into a collective decline. As

rappers tried to repeat the huge crossover success of "The Message" with transparently insincere social-consciousness raps, and break dancers made their way into soft-drink commercials, hip hop was losing its essential street urgency. In a little over three minutes, "Sucker M.C.'s" literally revived and redefined the anemic genre. Two guys and a gunshot drum machine (Jay hadn't joined the group yet), slicing through the malaise with the rawest kind of street talk: the dozens. Almost overnight, the dis (disrespect) rap controlled the street, and rappers started stripping their sound of all music. Hip hop was no longer, as Afrika Bambaataa called it, a renegade breed of funk. "Sucker M.C.'s" gave it its own brutal sound.

"It was just out there," says Run, "like basketball, man. Something to do. Found out I was good at scratching and made a record. There it is." This sort of "case closed" ejaculation, condensing eight years of his life into an epigram, is typical Run. He's the loud member of the group, periodically screaming a line from a song or pumping bravado. "Bloods aren't going to fuck with us, I'm telling you. I know my town." But when he's drawn into conversation, he's uncomforta-

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*"I could go for something
cool, crisp and Gordon's"*

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ble and closemouthed. In the pool hall he's jumpy, running outside, never spending much time with anybody.

"I ain't usually out here," he says. "I never go nowhere. I'm not into going out. I just play basketball, come in the house, eat dinner, and go to sleep. I don't like it out. I just stay in the house."

"Run never was a hang-out guy," Jay confirms. "Ever. He would go to a party and go home." Cause Run always had to go home to his wife and kid." Run just bought a house in Hollis, but for now he still lives with his father, his girlfriend of more than six years, and their almost three-year-old daughter, Vanessa. He is almost constantly looking for a phone to call home. "Yes. No. No, I'm coming right home after this."

What's your girlfriend's name? I ask.
"Cut Creator!" Shane yells, mimicking the line from LL Cool J's "Rock the Bells": "What's your DJ's name? Cut Creator."

"Valerie," says Run. "That ain't funny, man. She should read that in the article, then you in trouble."

Run's earned a reputation for being rude and smart-assed. He doesn't pay much attention to anything I say unless it concerns his music. (By the end of our three days, he's able to tell me just about every record I like, which mix, and why.) He got his start as DJ Run Love, the Son of Kurtis Blow. Blow and Run's older brother, Russell, who now runs the Def Jam label and manages Run-D.M.C., LL Cool J, Whodini, the Beastie Boys, and a host of other rappers, were freshmen at the City University of New York in Harlem, where Simmons started Rush Productions to book rap acts into college parties. At 12, Run joined Blow onstage and the two traded places in the spotlight before an audience that was hungry for this new music.

Simmons has been the group's guiding influence. At 28, Run's prematurely balding older brother, who rarely leaves the house without a Kangol, may be the most powerful figure in hip hop. His career formed the center of the film *Krush Groove*, and his Rush Productions groups have traditionally been the heart of any big rap tour. When Slick Rick split from Doug E. Fresh, he signed with Rush. And with Def Jam, as all new Rush artists now automatically do.

"The first year," says Jay, "Russell had us out there working for free. That means a lot of towns had big packed shows, and Run-D.M.C. was working free. He wasn't just trying to get money, he was trying to build something. So I love Russell for that, cause he built us."

Unlike his protégés, the older Simmons left Hollis and lives in Manhattan. He's a visionary while Run is lazily shortsighted, ambitious where Run is content. He has worked very hard as an independent businessman, and built a small empire. His vision is probably all that stands between Run-D.M.C. and the facile satisfaction of being local heroes. Like obedient younger brothers, Run, D.M.C., and Jay dutifully do what he wants.

*School girl sleazy with her classy kinda sassy
Little skirt hanging way up her knee
It was three young ladies in the school gym locker
And I found they were looking at D.*
—from "Walk This Way"

Two car stories:
*I'm riding with Jay in his Continental, breathing the
strawberry and green apple scent of ten pine-tree air
fresheners: two hanging from the rear-view mirror,
four from the ceiling, and two from each side of the
backseat. An '86 black Cadillac Fleetwood pulls up
beside us. The automatic windows of each car
lower. Run sticks his head out the passenger-side
window of the Fleetwood and yells: "Burger King!"*

Run: "I was driving past Daryl Woods on his bicycle one day, and I said, 'Let me just dis him real quick.' I pulled over and said, 'I believe that's a hard way to get around.' He said, 'Perhaps.'"

**"What do you think?" asks Run.
"You know it's a winning album.
Either that or leave Hollis now.
You can't front on my album. You
know it's the best shit."**

A fleet of cruisers are assembled in front of D.M.C.'s house. There's Jay's black Continental, Run's black '86 Buick Riviera, Fat Boy Markie Dee's silver Mercedes, and, just pulling up, D.M.C.'s black Fleetwood. Fifteen or 20 people from the neighborhood are hanging out around the cars.

"Where's the kid at?" says Run and, finding me, leads me and D.M.C. inside; no, he tells Mrs. McDaniels, it isn't necessary to get a pizza. D.M.C.'s brother Al and a light-skinned, freckled guy named Bimby follow us down to the basement, where a row of two-liter soda bottles and an ice bucket flank candy dishes filled with nuts.

"This is like my waiting room," says D.M.C., cueing



Chase Run

up and scratching a copy of Yellowman and Fathead's *Bad Boy Shanking* album on the glass-enclosed stereo. "When people come over, I gotta get up, take a shower, brush my teeth, clean my sneakers, shave. So I tell them to come down here and wait. I'm just living a life, man." He grins broadly.

Like Run, D.M.C. is a hard man to get a word out of. He just doesn't understand why you want to know, why you aren't as beatifically content as he is. "Today," he says, "I ain't got nothing to worry about. I washed my car. I gave my friend some money, he gonna pay me back tonight." Five days into kicking cigarettes, he seems happy.

"I used to draw the comic books," says D.M.C. "Spiderman, the Hulk, Captain America, Superman, and all that. Until I was 12. When I turned 12 I found out about rap and started rapping. First, I was a DJ. I used to DJ in my basement. Then I got tired of deejaying, and I just started writing rhymes. I used to rhyme for hours. Drink a 40-ounce beer, Olde English, and I wouldn't be able to shut up for the whole day and the whole night. Be rhyming all night loud everywhere I go. Everybody'd tell me, 'Yo, why don't you shut up, you been rhyming all night. Shut up, I don't like this guy, he won't shut up.' Rapping was more fun than being a DJ for me. 'Cause I could get on the mike and tell people how devastating I am."

Left to right: D.M.C., Jam-Master Jay, and Run making a point.

After a few Yellowman and Fathead tracks, he pulls out an album of old hip-hop instrumentals, and plays a rapless version of Grandmaster Flash's "Freedom."

"Remember this?" he asks, and passes the album jacket around. It's a generic white sleeve, custom decorated as the first record by the Magnificent Super Seven. In different-colored felt-tip pens, Easy Dee (D.M.C.), DJ Run, Terrible Tee, Runny Ray, Capri, Masta Tee Thiggs, and Dougie Bee invested the jacket with their names and their most unguarded hopes. It's a beautiful artifact of innocence and diligence, a meticulous enshrinement of seven adolescents' most prized icons—their names and their dreams.

*He's the better of the best
Best believe he's the baddest
Perfect timing when I'm climbing
I'm a rhyming apparatus
Lotta guts when he cuts
Girls move their butts
His name is Jay come to play
He must be nuts*

—From "Peter Piper"

Jay lives in an apartment in the basement of his mother's house with his girlfriend and their newborn baby, Jason Jr. Possibly because he's a new father, Jay seems the most responsible member of the group. In Burger King, he was the only one to throw out his garbage; D.M.C. saw him, looked back at the table, and continued to the checkout counter to deliver autographs. In the pool hall, when Daryl Woods tried to put Danny White Boy and me into a mock lineup, Jay put a stop to it. "I believe if one of my live homeboys came here," he told Woods, "he'd fuck one of y'all up." Then, to me: "I don't even come down here no more. You bring a friend down here, and they try to disrespect you. Ain't nobody in here anything compared to nothing."

"I was a wild kid," he says. "I hung out late. Hung out till the morning sometimes with my friends. I was the motivator. When I was 14, 15, all the big guys would say, 'Where we going tonight?' Any event that went down, I was on that train. I stopped being wild when I was 16. I started wanting to go to school all the time, wanting to be into books. When I say wild, I just didn't care. I was smarter than everybody in my class all the time, so I just felt like I didn't have to do the work. I was going to school, but I was messing up in school."

"After my father died, I really wised up. Everything changed for me then. I wanted to do what was right. Settled down, got a girlfriend. I was never really close, close friends with Run and D.M.C., but me and Run used to play basketball together, and me and D.M.C. used to drink Olde English."

As a kid, Jay played bass and drums at block parties in a corny band, but saw that DJs had more pull than bands. "I had a turntable," he says, "my friend had a turntable, all I had to do was buy a mixer. They had mixers for like 39 dollars. So my moms got me a mixer, and I started off like that. DJ battles was a fun thing. It was like a big park, and you're over there and I'm over here. My crew used to have so much equipment that if you was anywhere that we could see you, they couldn't hear you. Parties in Hollis, I was the DJ. Best guy in the neighborhood, for sure."

"The night I gave my biggest party, Run and D. went to the studio and put down 'It's Like That.' I couldn't go. They couldn't be at my party. I was mad that D. and Run wasn't at my party. Next day they came around with a tape. We started doing shows."

When "It's Like That" and "Sucker M.C.'s" became hits, Jay dropped out of Queens College, in the middle of his freshman year. Run dropped out of LaGuardia Community College, where he was studying mortuary science, and D.M.C. left St. John's. For a group that claims to be the first street-rap crew, these middle-class citizens aren't exactly street kids.

"The feeling inside of me was never a soft feeling," says Jay. "It's no matter where you're from. It's who you

are. There's no difference between the Bronx and Queens. It's just that we live in houses and they live in projects. So what? They went outside and had a fight with the guy down the block, we went outside and had a fight with the guy around the corner. No difference. Everybody seems to think that cause we come from a nice neighborhood... yo, everything that was everywhere else was in Queens, too. Drugs was out there. And then, I think that people from Queens have something more to prove than people from the Bronx. Mo Dee [from the Treacherous Three] and them, since they came from a rough neighborhood, they tried to act like they was from somewhere else. They used to be b-boys, but now they want to change their image to be like pop or something."

As far as Run-D.M.C.'s label is concerned, Jay is not a member of the group. He isn't signed to the label, and his picture appears on the back but never the front of the album covers. Until the new album, his royalties were half those of his partners: one percent of the retail sales. On *Raising Hell*, he gets two. "I spent the most time in the studio," he says. "I put the album together. It's all coming from a DJ's point of view, instead of a musician's point of view. If there was a producer of this album, Jason Mizell would be the producer of the album. But it's not. Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin (Simmons' partner at Def Jam) are. But I feel I produced it more than anybody produced it."

A gold Cadillac insignia the size of a tennis ball hangs from a chain around D.M.C.'s neck, and a slightly smaller one gleams on his finger. "Anybody that sees him knows that that's a rapper," says Run, his friend since kindergarten. Though he limits his wardrobe to Adidas-wear and jeans (Run-D.M.C. recently posed for an Adidas promotional poster), he has the biggest beeper and the most gold. He gets up to change the record.

"You hear this record," Run says, peeling the decals off a Rubik's cube in frustration to get one all-black side. "'You can't change your fate.' I don't appreciate that. You can change your fate."

But D.M.C. isn't concerned. Nor is he worried about the band's competition. "I'm telling you," he tells his nervous partner, "Niggers don't put us down for not being out. Niggers still love us. LL could have a lot of hits, niggers still come and tell me, 'You and Run are the best.' I'd be like, 'What about LL?' 'No, you and Run are the best. I haven't heard from you for five years, you're the best.'"

"I be believing," Run counters, "when we ain't there, they telling LL, 'Them boys is over, you're the new king.'"

"You wanna go to the store with me, man?" he asks me. When I tell him that I'm ready to split, disappointment crosses his face.

"Got a brand new Cadillac with a brand new 40 in the back," he laments. "See, you'd be my excuse to get this quart of beer."

He gets some money from his mother; D.M.C.'s parents control all his money, and give him an allowance. But there's money to be made.

On a three-day stint in California this summer, they expect to clear \$60,000 apiece. *Raising Hell* may sell more than a million copies. On the street, people constantly approach them for autographs; in Burger King, one of the guys behind the counter slipped them a tape. MTV sent a crew to cover the "Walk This Way" recording session. They may be on the verge of an unprecedented crossover success, but they built their careers proselytizing an image of regular Joe b-boys, eating Chicken Tenders at Burger King, and greasy chicken sandwiches on Wonder Bread with ketchup from Chung King. An old hip-hop club on the corner has turned into a "place for adults," D.M.C. tells me. "We can't go there no more. I don't go anywhere new now that I'm famous."

Dream sequence:

D.M.C.: "I had a dream there was about five parties going on in New York, and I was broke."

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Dabro Trehitz

A defiant swagger, too radical, too underground, sent from headbangers' heaven. Something about Metallica clashes with the format. On the road with the men of the hour.

Article by Sue Cummings

Metallica's tour manager sits at the desk in his hotel room, wrangling on the phone with the Houston promotions guy. "You gotta understand," he says, "a limo isn't this band's style. It's not their image. You get out of a limo in front of a store full of kids."

In the hall, drummer Lars Ulrich tosses bags onto the bellhop's cart. "We have to go in a limo?" He twists his face into a grimace. "Aw, fuck."

"They say the van they got has no air-conditioning," explains the tour manager in the tone of a tired parent. Before this job he worked for Laurie Anderson. "She was an adult," he says later.

On the way down in the elevator, lead guitarist Kirk Hammett grins greedily. "I wouldn't mind going in a nice, cool limo with a bar."

"I don't mind it as long as no one has to see it," says Lars.

In the hot, sun-flooded lobby they meet bassist Cliff Burton and singer/guitarist James Hetfield. No one is wearing platform shoes, spandex pants, designer leather, hair spray, or makeup. Metallica are too proud to dress up; their uniform is the uniform of their average fan, the Teenage American Slob: sneakers, ripped jeans, T-shirts. "Honesty is our only excuse," proclaims a tour T-shirt. Lars's T-shirt reads "Alcoholica/Drank 'em All." Like AC/DC, with Angus Young's velvet schoolboy suit, there is a single concession to costume. Cliff wears bell bottoms circa 1971, which give his long, thin legs a Gumby-like profile, twice as wide below the knee.

Outside, the limo is waiting. It's a white one. "Nice touch," someone says. Someone else suggests that they have the driver park it so they can walk the final block to the record store.

It is Mother's Day. The driver turns on the radio. "Well, John," croons the rock station DJ, "you've won tickets for you and your mom to see Ozzy at the Summit. Are you gonna take your mom, are you gonna take her to see Ozzy tonight, John?"

"Yes, sir, I sure am!"

"Great, John. John, can you tell us who rocks Houston?"

He makes no mention of Metallica, though they are opening the show. "Shot in the Dark" is the next song. Lars, politely shaking his hair in time with Randy Castillo's snare, looks bored and stares out the window. James asks, "Are radio stations this bad in New York?"

Lars thinks KNAC in Los Angeles is the best commercial station in the country. This is no surprise, since they play more Metallica than any other. No other rock band with an album in *Billboard's* Top

30 could complain of so little airplay. The word is out on Metallica's new album, *Master of Puppets*; the kids are buying, the critics, yes, even the respectable ones, are raving about these headbangers. But something about them clashes with the format. Metallica is too radical, too underground, as they say in the industry. Very few heavy-metal bands that play as intensely as Metallica are as open-minded. "That's one of the reasons we've progressed the way we have," says Lars. "We realized, working with a lot of different moods and dynamics, that there are other ways of accomplishing power and energy, other ways of being heavy, than just playing fast. People always want to lock you in a little square and say, OK, this is what you do. They don't need to know if we're thrash, speed, heavy, slow, green, black. All those categories—I hate 'em. That's why we have a band name, so that people will know who we are. If you want to pinpoint one thing about us, the best thing you could say is that there's always some sort of power there. As long as you have some sort of intensity, it's fuckin' Metallica."

Someone has a Misfits tape and luckily the limo has a tape player. The radio goes off, "Twenty Eyes in My Head" goes on, and Metallica becomes a Misfits air-guitar group in the throes of a communal epileptic seizure. They know all the words, and they yell them, stomping the floor, banging the windows, jerking their heads around, asking for whiplash.

The limo, full of flying hair, glides discreetly into a garage at the back of the record store.

Metallica enter the store to a chorus of screams. It is Friday afternoon, school is out, the concert is in five hours. Nothing to do but get wasted, crank some tunes, cruise around, maybe drop by Texas Tapes 'n' Records to ask Metallica to sign your guitar, or your girlfriend's chest. About 200 kids are lined up, waiting their turn at the table where Kirk, James, Lars, and Cliff are pressing the flesh and rapidly exhausting a box of Magic Markers.

"I can't believe I'm so close to them!" squeals a girl in a fake leopard-skin jacket. "Metallica are God!"

Another girl walks up to sit on Kirk's lap for a picture. "She can do whatever she wants," her boyfriend tells Kirk. The band is signing sneakers, denim jackets, pictures cut out of magazines.

"If you want to buy a record and you're on line," announces a store employee over the loudspeaker,

"just raise your hand and we'll bring it to you." One of the owners stands on the platform with the band, surveying the number of heads, mentally multiplying it by \$7.98. "You boys keep goin'," he tells Metallica. "You're doin' great. I think I'm gonna be able to get that edger! I'll be edgin' the backyard tomorrow."

"Can I have your beer?" asks a skinny boy, about 15, in a W.A.S.P. T-shirt. "They'll just take it from you," says James, nodding toward the armed policeman standing by the table.

"Will you sign the empty bottle?" he says.

"Sure," says James, draining the last of it.

"I just want you to call me," says a not-too-attractive girl, handing a piece of paper to Lars. "That's my phone number. Just, really, you know. If y'all call me and come pick me up, I'll let you have it." Lars signs her album very quickly, trying not to look disgusted.

Farther back in line, two girls are fighting over a poster. "You bitch!" says one. "Before you met me you didn't even know Metallica. Look at Kirk. He's in love with me, and he just doesn't know it yet. I'm gonna take this poster home and put it in my room, and if the house burns down I'll kill myself! Oh my God, look at that body!"

A tall, slim, tanned peroxide blond comes up and puts her album cover on the table. "Hello ladies, lookin' good today," says Cliff, smiling at her and her friend. They smile back, say nothing. Finally her friend asks Lars, "Can you get us backstage passes?"

"Why do you want to go backstage?" says Lars. "It's so boring there. Do you know what's back there? A bunch of cables, flight cases, a dressing room, and a bunch of people trying to get out of backstage." The tall girl stands on her toes and whispers in Lars's ear. "Oh, you have something more specific in mind," he laughs. "Come back to the bus. It's the Mermaid, it has a mermaid painted on the side. It'll be somewhere back there before, during, and after the show." The girl nods and blushes, turns around and walks away. Lars stands up to get a better look at her derriere.

"Y'all are gonna blow Ozzy away tonight," says another boy.

When Metallica leave the store for their sound check, they take \$600 worth of merchandise. The store lets them have it free. "That's what we're about," boasts Lars. "Taking advantage of people." Pulling out onto the highway, they notice a Houston police car with a siren in front of them.

"Fuckin' stylin' police escort," says James.

"Yeah," says Kirk, "he doesn't have anything better to do."

"They probably turn the siren on whenever they get bored, or if they're late coming home for dinner," laughs Cliff.

"Just imagine him up there, driving around, all full of silent rage," says Lars.

Metallica swagger with the defiant air of having escaped entering adulthood under the yoke of a "real job." They are the men of the hour. The tour bus, the girls, the room service, the big halls—it has just dawned on them that they're making it in rock 'n' roll. The tour contract calls for two bottles of Absolut vodka a night, but they also like sushi in the dressing room. Other than that they seem to have little idea what they'll do with the money. Drinking is the only excess they can claim. Kirk spends the \$30 per diem on comic books, Japanese toys, and miniatures. James considers installing a skateboard ramp in his backyard, but he and Lars gave up their house in San Francisco for this year on the road. "The last time we went on tour (with W.A.S.P.)," says Lars, "all our friends came over and helped themselves. It's too bad, because we had converted the garage into a rehearsal studio."

Lars and James first shared a house in Los Angeles, where they met in 1981. "We used to drink every night and jam," says Lars, "just playing what we wanted and having a really good time. The basic principle is still just a bunch of drunken idiots having a good time. When I met James he had just about heard of Iron Maiden. In the beginning I insisted on playing underground European stuff—old Judas Priest, Diamond Head, Motorhead, Angelwitch, Trespass.

"I moved from Europe to L.A. at the high point of the second wave of British heavy metal, the Iron Maidens, Saxons, Def Leppards. Because I felt so isolated in the U.S. it influenced me to do something different from what was going on in L.A. Every week I got *Sounds* on an airmail subscription, and I got friends of mine in Denmark and England to send me all the new stuff that was coming out. It gave me a kick to get a band together that was very different—a European-oriented

thing where the main focus was on the music."

Backstage in Houston, groupies, roadies, locals from stores and radio stations lounge around the catering area, their beers in plastic cups. Ozzy's people don't like high-profile alcohol. Ozzy's tour contract has a rider that stipulates no alcohol in his dressing room. Because of Ozzy's well-known temper, Metallica's people have warned them to avoid him, especially if he is drinking, especially if Ozzy's wife and manager, Sharon, is not around. One night Lars hung with Ozzy anyway, and Ozzy was a little drunk. Lars reportedly asked Ozzy if he washed his hair after the show. Ozzy took it the wrong way. For a while it seemed as if Metallica was in danger of being kicked off the tour. The opening slot is critical at this stage of their career, but the nightly double encores they've been getting for their 55-minute set may have sparked some resentment from Ozzy. "Ozzy says we're the Black Sabbath of the '80s," says Kirk.

Ozzy calls this tour "The Ultimate Tour." You could interpret that to mean his last. But Metallica calls this tour "Damage, Inc." At the Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey, the audience did \$125,000 worth of damage to their seats during Ozzy's encore. "They wanted us back," says Kirk. Bob Karney, president of operations for the Meadowlands, calls the damage "literally without precedent."

"You should be glad you're not out there now," says Lars. Ozzy is two-thirds of the way through his set. "He's got his back to the audience, humping the drum risers." Lars rolls his eyes. "No, wait," he says. "Don't say that." I tell Lars his article will be read first in August, two months after Ozzy's tour ends. He pauses to consider this. Then he says, "We think Ozzy is great. He's been really good to us on this tour. We're honored to play with him. He's one of the people who started this whole thing. Say that."

He continues the retractions. "I hope you don't take what I said this afternoon, about taking advantage of people, seriously. I was just joking. We're actually the opposite. I'd like to think we never take advantage of anyone."

Lars assumes the responsibilities of band

spokesman because he formed Metallica. At 22, though he sometimes wavers when dispensing statements to the press, he wears success well. He's a wiry, confident, animated bundle of energy. He runs several miles a day (sometimes trailed by a carload of curious fans) and his smallish frame seems to carry not an ounce of fat. Behind the stage, minutes before the band goes on, he warms up by jogging in place, shadowboxing with drumsticks in his fists. It is the discipline and self-absorption of an athlete. Lars's father, Torbek Ulrich, was a big and somewhat notorious name in European pro tennis during the '60s and '70s.

"I never thought of how my father influenced me until I started talking about it a month ago. All of a sudden the whole thing came into perspective. In tennis, which was a very conservative thing in the '60s and '70s, he was always the odd one. I had quite a different upbringing than most people. I was raised in Copenhagen, but traveled all over the world. I had a dad and mom who were very open-minded, some people would say maybe a little freaky. To this day, my dad, who's 58, has still got longer hair than I do. He's got a longer beard than the guys in ZZ Top. He looks like Rasputin.

"My dad never catered to the so-called white ways of tennis, where you have to have short hair, and everything is so clean.

"He challenged the seriousness of what tennis was in the '60s. In a sense Metallica is almost doing the same thing. Heavy metal today is very conservative. You meet so many bands who are really businessmen, approaching it from a business point of view. I think a lot of people can see that it's not a huge put-on when we go onstage. What they see is a bunch of kids having fun playing what we want to play, giving the finger to everyone who wants to interfere. I look upon Metallica as the first group that has been able to step away from the patterns of what heavy metal is today. It's a great feeling when you look at *Billboard* and you're in the Top 30 and you know you haven't catered to anyone else's shit.

"Heavy metal today is such a big cliché," he says. Out in the hall, the crowd roars as Ozzy lurches into "Iron Man."

"A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."

—Ecclesiastes

*Time for lust, time for lie
Time to kiss your life goodbye
Send me money, send me green
Heaven you will meet
Make a contribution
And you'll get the better seat
Bow to leper messiah*

—"Leper Messiah"

The Mermaid takes Metallica to Dallas. "This is the Bible Belt," says Jeff as we are handed pamphlets warning against the devil's music distributed outside the arena by some believers from the Grace Baptist Youth Mission. Despite this outward uprightness, Jeff swears without flinching that Dallas/Fort Worth is the Ecstasy drug capital of the world. "I don't know where it comes from," he says, "but last summer the whole town was on it."

Backstage, the scene is twice as wild as Houston. The hall has room to park tour buses inside, which opens up a certain area of possibilities. Girls with dyed hair in gaudy, sequined dresses teeter on stilettos. Some of them have bought their backstage passes in the parking lot, and some have no passes at all. Jeff's friend who works at Zorlac Skateboards says, "This girl told me she gave the guards a half gram of coke just to

Ask the kids at a show to describe Metallica.
"Kick ass!" they say.

With the tour bus, the girls, the room service, the big halls, it has just dawned on Metallica that they're making it in rock 'n' roll.



Pointing the way to headbanger heaven are (L-R) James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett, and Cliff Burton.

get backstage. Then when she got there, she stood around and not even the roadies would have anything to do with her. She gave up her drugs just to stand by the truck." The chosen follow Ozzy's roadies into their bus during his set. When they emerge, giggling and staggering, the roadies come out and invite others inside.

After the show, Metallica stand around by the buses talking to fans. Most of the girls, there for Ozzy, don't seem to recognize the opening band. Lars is sitting in a closet jammed with undetonated pyro effects.

After Lars formed the band in L.A., he and James moved to San Francisco where they jockeyed for position in the Bay Area scene. They recorded a demo, "No Life 'til Leather," with guitarist Dave Mustaine and bassist Don McGovney. Before they signed with Megaforce for *Kill 'em All*, McGovney was replaced by Cliff Burton and Mustaine left to form Megadeth. Kirk left Exodus and joined the band when Lars called him to New York for rehearsals, and he stayed there to play on the record.

The underground-metal tape traders had been raving about Metallica's demo, but with the release of their first album they were the buzz of 1982. At that time, Q-Prime partners Cliff Burnstein and Peter Mensch were looking for a hot new band on which to spend some of the money they had made managing teen idols Def Leppard. This time they wanted a group with street credibility, so they went to a record store and headbangers' hangout in London, to see what people were talking about.

"When I saw two kids who worked there in London wearing the T-shirts of a local San Francisco band, I knew I was onto something," says Burnstein. "When I heard their record, I knew they were the one band that could sell to both mainstream and underground metal audiences." He bought them off the management contract they had with Megaforce's Johnny Z, and helped them negotiate a deal with Elektra for their subsequent album, *Ride the Lightning*.

Metallica has fused melodic metal with the speed, complexity, and aggression of thrash. Each of their three albums progressively widens the scope of their force. *Master of Puppets*, their latest, flexes your ears. It's lyrically fantastical and real, answering rock's long-ignored big challenge: to play both light and heavy music powerfully and sensitively, compromising neither extreme and ultimately transcending those distinctions. Ask the kids at a show to describe Metallica: "Kick ass!" they say.

"I think people are starting to understand," says Lars, "that this band is about a lot of different things. We always want to mature, to get better at writing, individual musicianship, arranging. Usually by the third album, you and the people around you have a tendency to know whether it's going to fly or not. The good thing about what's going on with us is that obviously the curve is still pointed upwards."

This newfound sophistication is not to everyone's liking. Some diehard headbangers still favor *Kill 'em All*. They don't understand why Metallica would record a slow instrumental ballad like "Orion" on the new LP. And some radio programmers have been crudely chopping up the seven-minute-long "Orion" single into three minutes.

Still, *Master of Puppets* has gone gold, the first album of its kind to do so. Underground metal fans who don't regret losing Metallica to the arenas see this as a victory for their scene. Metallica is music made by youth for youth, an age group no longer ruling the industry by majority. No wonder their success represents a cause. Remaining true to a tough identity incompatible with MTV, AOR, or even college radio, Metallica are the first in years to build a big career in American rock disregarding the dictates of all three. They've called their own shots, kept their integrity,



Stanley Greene

In New Jersey, the audience did \$125,000 of damage during Ozzy Osbourne's encore. "They wanted us back," says Kirk.

and rallied their support on the strength of their music and non-image. As for that non-image, says Burnstein, a self-confessed old hippie: "If one of them gets a haircut, I'll kill myself."

If anyone reads the lyrics on *Master of Puppets*, says Lars, "it should be quite obvious to them what we're questioning. We're not trying to make some huge political statement. We're just writing about things that interest us. During the past year, we've tried to write about the stuff around us, real stuff. The cover of the album and four of the songs—'Leper Messiah,' 'Welcome Home (Sanitarium),' 'Master of Puppets,' and 'Disposable Heroes'—deal with the whole idea of manipulation. We're questioning this whole thing with authority, with different institutions, drugs, alcohol, religion—it could be so many things controlling people's lives."

"*Master of Puppets* is about someone whose life is controlled—by coke, other drugs, the government, whatever—and he's not facing up to it. It deals with the way people think they're in charge of what they're doing, leading their own lives, when really they're having their life pulled in different ways, and at the same time whoever is doing this is saying, 'You're free.'"

"That's the hardcore influence over us," Kirk explains, "that lyrics should be competent." The hardcore ethic, distilled over the past six years and inherited by Metallica, has always projected anger at the system, fear of fate, and idealism about honesty.

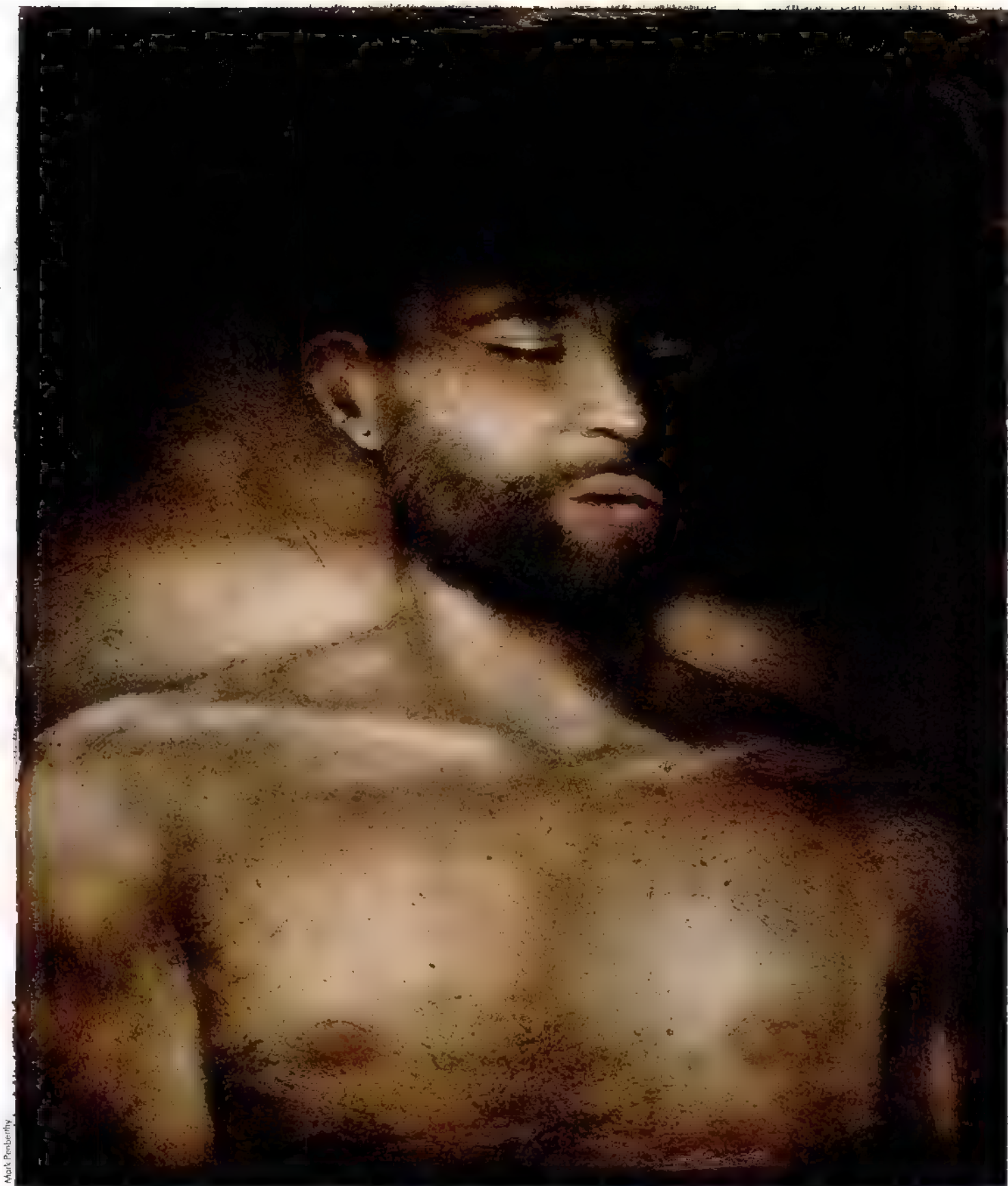
"We're doing things that a lot of other heavy-metal bands have never touched on," says Lars. "One of the reasons we've been able to do that is that we have 100 percent freedom from our management and our record company. We're showing the industry that you can write eight-minute songs, you can be honest with yourself and your crowd, you don't have to put a huge, pretentious thing on just to come across and relate to the people out there. Because they're scared about the same things we are."

James writes Metallica's lyrics. He is the kind of guy who calls animal corpses on the highway "road pizza." This fascination with the morbid, which Metallica shares with death metal, doesn't stop with Metallica's songs. The hotel lobby in Fort Worth has a goldfish pond. Metallica and its entourage gather there, waiting to check out and leave for the long overnight haul to El Paso. Adrian the lighting man, Big Mick the sound man, and Cliff are bored. They kneel around the tiled basin, stick their hands in the water, and molest the big, sluggish fish.

"C'mon you guys, didn't you just eat dinner?" says the tour manager.

Kirk and James come over to check this out. Kirk pulls a piece of bread from a paper bag and drops it in the water. Instantly, the goldfish dart to eat it. "I wonder if they'd eat...?" says James. He hawks up a huge wad of phlegm and shoots it into the water. They gobble it down.

"Hah!" shouts James. Everyone else is laughing hysterically. "Write about that!"



Mark Pemberton

THE COP WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD

Frank Serpico, the cop who brought down the New York Police Department and was nearly killed for it, is now an outcast, alone, a martyr who has outlived his martyrdom.

Article by Tom Piazza

The last I remembered of Frank Serpico was the closing shot of the movie: Al Pacino sitting on a park bench, looking lost, his face covered by a shaggy beard, his sheep dog next to him, as a summary of Serpico's life between the ending of the story and the making of the movie crawled upward on the screen. He had gone to live in Switzerland, it said. That was in 1973.

Serpico first made news in 1970, when *The New York Times* ran a series of front-page stories on corruption in the New York City Police Department, based largely on information he had provided. He had been a city cop since 1959, but had never been able to get used to a lot of the routine elements in a cop's life—free meals, sleeping on the job, small bribes. When he graduated to plainclothes duty, the graft and other abuses got more serious and more systematized. He spent years trying to get his superiors on the force to act on, or even listen to, his stories, but most of them were corrupt themselves. They dismissed him as a "psycho," because of his unconventional appearance and behavior. He lived in Greenwich Village, wore a beard, went to the opera and ballet, and read a lot.

After years of frustration and increasing hostility and isolation from the cops he worked with, Serpico went to the *Times*. The scandal that followed resulted in the formation of the Knapp Commission, caused a massive reorganization of the NYPD, and cost a lot of cops their jobs.

In February 1971, during a drug bust in a Brooklyn tenement, Serpico was shot in the face and critically wounded. The bullet barely missed his brain; he made a miraculous recovery, but lost the hearing in his left ear. There was speculation that the shooting had been a setup, but nothing was ever proved. He was promoted to detective, a rank he had desired his whole life, then awarded the department's Medal of Honor, but by the time the movie came out Serpico had resigned from the department and moved to Europe. He came back briefly, in 1974, to campaign for Ramsey Clark's

losing Senate bid, but after that, he was hardly heard from again.

I heard that a literary agent had run into Serpico recently at a party on Long Island. Evidently he had been back in the US for some time, living on the estate where the party was held; he didn't seem to be able to get himself together. I hadn't thought about him in a long time, but I was instantly curious. I thought of something Bob Dylan said in the December issue of *SPIN*: "I'd like to interview people who died leaving a great unsolved mess behind, who left people for ages to do nothing but speculate." Unanswered questions orbited around Serpico. He was one of the most heroic figures in recent memory, but he had dropped out of sight—given up, apparently—just as he was being vindicated. What had happened to him?

On the face of it, *Serpico* is a straightforward story of individual integrity and strength pitted against official corruption and hypocrisy. There is lots of good police stuff—Serpico running down alleys after hoods, edging along rooftops on stakeouts, and busting up storefront gambling operations. As his misgivings grow about the graft around him, you can feel the uneasiness, then the hostility, of his fellow officers. Serpico's frustration at being unable to get anyone to act, and his sense of persecution, become almost palpable. You are immediately struck by his unwillingness to compromise, his tendency toward self-pity, his bravery, his surprising naïveté. There is a constant tension between his need to find an authority he can believe in unreservedly (the succession of superior officers he confides in, the fruitless connections with the mayor's office, his childhood worship of policemen) and his rejection of any authority at all.

More than anything, though, I came away from the book with the feeling that Serpico never really knew who he was. He was always trying on different roles, as if to see whether he felt at home anywhere. According to author Peter Maas, he was

a "first-rate mimic." He had "an uncanny ability with foreign languages." He liked friends to call him Paco (Spanish for Frank). He was a master of disguises and was always experimenting with them. In his early days as a uniformed patrolman he would dress up as an old man and go out on his own when he was off duty, hoping to invite trouble. Later, when he was assigned to the "pussy posse"—the whore patrol in Times Square—he went out every night in a different combination of hats, glasses, fake beards, walking sticks, and pipes. But the main disguise seemed to be the policeman's role itself.

"Every time you flash that gold shield you become someone else," Serpico once told David Durk, his closest friend on the force. "You're not David Durk any more, you're the New York Police Department."

Just a few years later, though, in an article for the *Village Voice*, Serpico wrote, "Eventually I realized, hey, I'm not always going to have this shield in my pocket, and then who am I? That shield isn't me. I'm nobody."

After I re-read the book, I called the literary agent who had met Serpico at the party. I'll call her Louise. She had always been interested in cops, she said, and still wanted to do the "ultimate" cop story. She had discussed the idea with Serpico at the party.

"Frank is in . . . an interesting state now," she said. "He seems to be functioning on a metaphysical plane, in an astral world. He's found a certain . . . I don't know if it is peace—he thinks it's peace, and who's to say that it isn't? And it's really being out of the mainstream, really dealing in this higher power, and living out in the country, with the flowers and the trees, doing odds-and-ends kinds of work, like a handyman—fixing cars and just doing that type of dropping out."

The party was held at the house of a movie director, an old acquaintance of Serpico's. When Serpico came back to the States from Holland, three or four years ago, the director let him stay on the

"There's corruption in every walk of life. Why do they always want to single out cops?"

property in a trailer while the house was being built. He was almost broke; a paternity suit had cost him most of his police disability pension and used up his life savings. "Now that the house is finished," she went on, "and [the director] is away so much, Frank is in the house, taking care of things that need to be repaired. He's protecting the property, and when there are people there, Frank's included."

"He was quiet at the party, and a little bit mocking, just a little. Life is a joke and a laugh to him. He has about three earrings running up one ear. His hair is very closely cropped, as is his beard, and he walks with . . . a twinkle, kind of elfish. He reminds me a bit of, what's his name, the guru . . . Rajneesh. That impishness, that way of walking . . . Frank has that. He's philosophical in his thoughts, and he kind of holds court, like a guru."

She said she would call him and try to set up the interview. After I hung up, I just sat there for a while, trying to sort things out. "Guru," "astral world," "metaphysical plane" . . . ?

I spent the weekend digging around for stuff about Serpico. Maybe the most startling thing I found was a phenomenally long piece that appeared in the *Village Voice* in February 1975, called "A Letter Home." Serpico sent it in from Holland, where he was living at the time. He rambles for roughly 10,000 words—about the NYPD, corruption, police in the Netherlands, the responsibility of public officials, Watergate, and his quiet life in Europe—wrestling with ideas he can't quite dominate. Thoughts surface, then others shoulder them out of the way. Most of the piece reads like this: "Leadership is a two-way street. If Ford, or any other president, wants the respect and help of the American people, he can't keep treating them like idiots. In order for the system to work, the leader has to give out as much respect as he demands from those below him" — things you don't really hear anybody say anymore, but when you remember what he put on the line because he believed that stuff . . . I came away really moved. He was so passionate about what he was saying. He had bought all the promises of democracy, really bought them. Reading the piece was like finding a giant dinosaur skeleton. We've all gotten so fucking hip, I kept thinking.

But there was something unsettling about it. For one thing, despite the commitment and belief he brought to what he had to say, the fact was that he was in a self-imposed exile. For another, the piece was so long. It is one thing to hear someone make a short, spontaneous, impassioned speech; it is another thing to hear someone make a two-hour long, spontaneous, impassioned speech. The pain implicit in Serpico's ability to go on for so long at such a high emotional pitch was bottomless.

Serpico's name touched a nerve in just about everybody I talked to; people's attention quickened, as if hearing about him might tell them something about themselves. Ralph Ellison once said that the search for identity was the American theme; something about Serpico's story hit everybody where they lived.

As Americans, we want to believe that society works the way the Constitution says it should, but part of the search for identity that Ellison was talking about comes from the constant conflict between our stated ideals and reality. All the great periods of heroism and tragedy in America—the Civil War, Vietnam, and the civil rights movement, for three—



UPI/Bettman News Photos

have this conflict at their center. Of course, Serpico's story is exactly about the conflict between ideals and reality, and what makes it especially moving on a personal level is that his sense of who he is seems to hang on finding a resolution of the conflict.

Serpico had bought into the ideal of what a cop was with all the earnestness of a son of immigrants who thought of America as one nation under God, where your uniform was you, and your role in the community was almost a ritual mask in an ongoing drama. Serpico's sense of identity depended on the notion that the cop's role in society was good; it was, in a way, a religious view of the job. The world is harmonized if your role is what it says it is; chaos takes over when people are not what they say they are. The erosion of the integrity of the cop's role threatened the logic of his place in the world.

But at the same time, Serpico was constantly frustrated by the uniform. Not only was he identified with corrupt practices in the eyes of people he had never met (a motorist trying to bribe him out of issuing a traffic ticket, a lunch counter guy giving him free meals), but he chafed under the systematized, rulebook aspects of a cop's life. Happiness came when he could leap above the restrictions and the mickey mouse bullshit and make personal contact to help someone. He liked to see himself as a lone hero—not just a hero to the public, but to the police department, too. He wanted to be simultaneously at odds with the department, critical of it, and thanked by it.

Serpico was always looking for a mentor in the department, always complaining that nobody "gave a fuck" about what he was doing. The search for some higher authority to believe in runs all through Serpico's story like a vitamin deficiency. All good Catholics—or Protestants or Jews or Muslims—believe that God is watching them; it gives them a rationale for sacrifice, helps them deal with lonely hardship. But what happens if God disappears? In America, at least, media attention has taken God's place; it lets you know you exist; it confers grace, even immortality. We've traded the Big Guy for the Big Eye.

Years of isolation and struggle were on the menu

for Serpico, and he bore up under it with unbelievable persistence and strength. Somehow he maintained that paradox of the loner who defends the integrity of the system, and eventually he was vindicated—the Knapp Commission, the department's Medal of Honor, the detective's gold shield he had always wanted. But he left—completely disillusioned, evidently—just as he was vindicated, and that act leaves a lot of questions in its wake. What had he been expecting to find on that hypothetical day when vindication came? What had he held onto through all those lonely times when nobody was watching? Did he have a God that he prayed to, some unimaginably pure faith that kept him going, or was he secretly craving the triumph of public recognition? Had he traded, somewhere in the depths of his isolation and frustration, the hope of one for the hope of the other? He got to that great good place where everybody "gave a fuck," but something snapped in him. Society eventually conferred its ultimate vindication—a movie of his life. Had he learned by then that that, too, was vanity?

I sat down and tried to think out something to say in a letter to Serpico—why the article would be important, why he should talk. It occurred to me that he was not, by nature, as much of a recluse as he wanted to be. I remembered his *Voice* article; how he had gone on and on as if talking gave him relief from the pain he carried around. That desire to talk was a weak spot in him, something you could take advantage of. The question of whether it was right to take advantage of it bothered me a little, though. I had misgivings. But the hunt is intoxicating; you throw your doubts overboard.

And there were real reasons why he should talk. Often, the people who challenge the kinds of forces that Serpico dared get killed close to the peak of their activity, and we don't have to deal with the added complexity of, say, someone who was only

Serpico (with his lawyer, Ramsey Clark) testifying before the Knapp Commission hearings in 1971.



great for a minute, or a week, or two years. Serpico survived his martyrdom. If sanity is the ability to hold contradictions in mind, then our sanity as a culture may depend on our ability to comprehend huge incongruities in our public figures, and certainly to outgrow our insistence that heroes live happily ever after, or die gloriously, i.e., that people be rewarded for being good. Or that the reason for doing good is to be rewarded. In fact, images of the heroic are destructive if they don't summon forth a corresponding vision of the tragic. Muhammad Ali, for example, may turn out to be as important for what he teaches us about the nature of tragedy (if we could listen) as for what he taught us about heroism.

If he didn't feel he owed anybody a statement, I wrote, I understood, although it was possible that he did; when someone has as large an impact on the national consciousness as he had, their choices continue to be meaningful whether or not they choose to remain in the public eye. When I finished the letter, I sent it off along with some copies of SPIN, and settled in for a wait.

By the next Saturday, I was pretty sure Serpico had gotten the envelope, and I decided to call him in the afternoon.

After a few rings, an answering machine picked up. It answered with a yawn, and then a sleepy, sing-song voice said, "Saturday morning; got in re-e-e-late last night, so I'll return your calls when I get up. But don't expect to hear from me too early!" —these last words in the tone of a mother admonishing a child to be home by dinner time. I left a message asking him to call me.

By Monday I still hadn't heard from him, and in the early afternoon I tried again. The phone machine answered, this time with a fake Puerto Rican street voice. I left another message.

The week slid by as I waited for an answer. I was

thinking all my questions through on Thursday night, beginning to doubt that I would hear from Serpico, when something told me to call him.

Someone picked up the phone after two rings.

"Hello?"

It was Serpico.

He had a soft, pleasant voice, with a definite Brooklyn accent.

"I'm very content with my life," he was saying, "and I don't want to do anything to . . . you know, anything I do has to be . . . very much in tune with what I'm doing, and very comfortable. That's why I say I can't see myself sitting down with anybody and talking out a whole lot of things . . . I mean, I'm not interested in any notoriety, or . . . And then, of course, what you said in the letter, that's gone through my head so many times. You think you have to do somethin' . . . and it's . . . it's a big ego sensation. Right now, I'm just observing and, uh, . . . that's about it."

It was as if I were reading the *Voice* piece again; the same sense of all these thoughts boiling beneath the surface. . . .

"Just about everything that we're doing, the majority of people now, the focal point is making money. They have to make money, the way they're living, to pay the ridiculous rents, to live in the ridiculous places they live in. Um . . . you know, people have for their heroes rock stars, who live like millionaires, and have no relationship to the poor little guy in the street, who's spaced out. I talk to a lot of kids — you know, parents, with all their money, with all their bullshit, they can't set no direction for their children. And the children don't know where the hell to go. I mean, sure, they'll space out at a rock concert for a while, if they got enough stuff to keep them goin' and I'm . . . personally, I'm not against . . . I mean, to the people who are using drugs—what else is there? Whattya got to give 'em? Hey, man has screwed himself so much, he needs a tranquilizer. And, you know, some people say, 'Well, things are improving.' Things are not improving. There will never be enough to offset the direction the masses are going. And that's why I feel at this time, hey, who's gonna

"To the people who are using drugs, what else is there? Whattya got to give 'em?"

read it, and what difference is it going to make, other than a story, in the sense that, uh . . . um . . ."

"In the sense," I said, "of it just being centered on you as a personality, and not having any effect on the way people look at things?"

"Right. You know, I see reactions that I've gotten in the past — 'Isn't that great, but . . . uh . . . what were we doing?' . . . and uh, I mean, at first I considered it, because I thought maybe it's an offbeat magazine that would be more willing to quote me accurately, but, like I said before, what might sound like bitterness is, as I see it, a realistic view of . . . reality. I mean, I am totally against all forms of institutionalized religion. I think the Pope is like the biggest hype of all times. You know, people don't want to see that this guy has got a hook through their nose. He's there quoting Gandhi, yet he has no relationship to Gandhi. He has no relationship to Christ. The guy is a modern-day superstar; he has a fantastic wardrobe, he's got fantastic media coverage."

I was trying to think of what to say next to keep him going, but before I could say anything, he went on.

"You say that, you know, you weren't interested in the police, or in the paternity thing, uh, but what I tried to say on the Donahue show, and which didn't seem to be understood, was that it had nothin' to do with paternity, in the sense that, you know, what this woman *did*, to have to deceive somebody to impregnate her, and not only that, she had to go to court and take him for what he was worth, and having no regard for the child at all . . . So now, here's this kid . . ."

"How old is he?"

"I guess he's going to be six. And, you know, I talk to him on the phone, because I wanted to make myself available for him; I figured, this poor kid is goin' through life with this stigma now. And I can't talk to him about his mother; he's gonna have to find out when he gets older, but what good does that do? And then I thought, hey, listen . . . The best book I ever read, because it had the best message in it, was called *Be Here Now*, by Ram Dass. And that's the only thing that keeps pulling me back, is every time I'm here now and looking at the whole picture, and just, you know, waiting the time. But the point is, I'm not really into . . . like, I'll talk to you on the phone, but . . . when you're doing an interview, it's like you're using time of your life that really isn't going to make a difference, other than . . ."

"You know," I said, "you keep saying that, and I just don't agree, man. You just don't know who's out there, or what you might say that will get somebody thinking, assuming they're not dead already . . ."

"I used to see zombie pictures when I was a kid. Boy, I never knew I would come so close to seein' 'em in real life. But that's just it—people don't want to hear the truth; they don't want to realize that they've been making mistakes. You cannot threaten people's positions. I was making arrests on the street where cops would give me no backing, you know. I received no support at all, and . . . and the bullshit about what they were saying about all these cops offering me blood was . . . was . . . was bullshit."

I asked him if he ever saw Durk anymore, his old confidant.

"Nope, never saw him anymore. I mean, I really have nothing against Durk, other than in his unrealistic approach. He was ambitious, and he had other ideas. And he had a very cavalier attitude. He got involved later with the guy that played him, and

Shot in the head during a drug bust, Serpico recovered but lost the hearing in one ear.

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WE'RE A HAPPY FAMILY

When you're a Ramone, it only takes the rest of the world 12 years to catch up with you.

It was one of those humid summer days in 1979 when the air on the Bowery was filled with the foul odor of week-old garbage. A horribly muggy day that promised to kill off everyone in New York City. The Ramones were happy to be getting out of town and found refuge in their air-conditioned van as they prepared for a two-and-a-half-hour drive to Baltimore. They hadn't even driven the several blocks through the Bowery into Chinatown before trouble started.

"John, you better take back what you said about my girlfriend!" Dee Dee Ramone stammered from the back of the van, where he was sitting next to a platinum blond. Johnny ignored him. Up front, Joey Ramone, in the passenger seat, rifled through a box of tapes looking for the right morning music. Way in the back, Marky Ramone slept off a hangover. A couple of girlfriends and a journalist filled the extra seats. Everyone acted as if Dee Dee wasn't even there.

"JOHN, YOU'D BETTER TAKE BACK WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT MY GIRLFRIEND..." Dee Dee continued screaming.

"What?" Johnny sneered. "That she's a slut?"

"I'M GONNA KILL YOU! I'M GONNA KILL YOU!" Dee Dee was going hoarse from screaming and the veins on his neck looked like they were about to explode.

"No, you're not," Johnny laughed calmly. The rest of the Ramones ignored the outburst as their girlfriends busied themselves with their nails. Johnny refused to give an inch. Finally, Dee Dee couldn't take it anymore. He jumped out of the van at a stoplight, and, like the grunt on the chopper in *Apocalypse Now*, screamed, "I'M NOT GOIN'!"

Monty Melnick, the Ramones' driver and tour manager, took Dee Dee aside and after listening to him rant and rave for half an hour, calmly talked him into getting back in the van. A journalist along for the mini-tour decided to make a hasty retreat, on foot, back to the Bowery.

"What's the matter," Joey laughed. "Can't you take the pressure?"

After 12 years without a hit record, without record company support, without radio or video airplay, and with only their records and live performances, their grinding chainsaw beat, and the kick-ass shows that remind one of an aircraft carrier while a squadron of jet fighters lift off for a bombing run, one blaring rocker after another—the band that reinvented rock 'n' roll has withstood the pressure.

Q: What did you think of the Ramones' show the other night?

Norman Mailer: "For me it was like I was an old car and I was being taken out for a ride at 100 miles an hour, and I kind of like it because I was really getting rid of a lot of rust. I don't know if I'd like it night after night, and I'm not sure it isn't absolutely killing. You've got to be super-human to play that stuff night after night and not have your senses wiped out by it."

"Nobody's gonna like you guys, but I'll have you back."
—Hilly Kristal, owner of CBGB's, to the Ramones after their first audition.

Hey, hey, what's going on?" Joey greets you at the door. You know he's been on the phone for an hour. "Could you, like, hang on for a minute?" he asks sheepishly. He's always embarrassed that he can't give you his full attention, but his life's one constant interruption after another. The phone doesn't even ring, the receiver just keeps clicking with Joey saying, "Can you hold on for a second?" while he jockeys calls. On the floor is a tangle of extension cords, strips of outlets, tape recorders, portable keyboards, video cassettes, tape cassettes, and clothes from his last tour. On

The band that reinvented rock 'n' roll: (front) new drummer Richie and Johnny, (rear) Joey and Dee Dee.

Article by Legs McNeil and John Holmstrom



George DuBore

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Against Blue Light	100%
Against Impact	Exceeds DOT test, VPSC & NASA anti-shield specs
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Frame Material	Ultra-light impact resistant Lexan
Nosepiece	Slip-resistant, mild, hydrophilic
Total Weight	25 grams (1 ounce)
Adjustability	Adjustable earpieces
Avail. Colors	Black, white, blue, gray, red, yellow, green, orange, purple, pink, silver, gold, chrome, etc.
Special Features	Scratch resistant, polycarbonate lenses, ultra-light impact resistant frame, adjustable earpieces, etc.
Suggested Retail	\$65.00

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the kitchen table where Joey sits talking on the phone are piles of fan mail and empty take-out cartons. On the walls hang original *Hard Day's Night* and some obscure Mick Jagger Western film posters, and on the couch lie boxes of the new album, *Animal Boy*, and the English EP, "Something to Believe In." Joey hasn't had time to listen to the new LP more than a couple of times, but everyone in the room is going crazy over it, though they don't want to seem overenthusiastic. "It's good, isn't it?" Joey laughs, finally getting off the phone. Everyone smiles and shakes their heads. The Ramones have done it again. The pressure's off now.

It all started in a back room of a paint store, with Joey on drums, Johnny on lead, Dee Dee on bass and lead vocals, and another guy, who got kicked out after the first few rehearsals. Tommy Erdelyi, later Tommy Ramone, the first drummer and ad hoc adviser/manager, thought they would be an instant smash on the downtown artsy-fartsy music scene. The New York rock scene was in its death throes, but Lou Reed's *Berlin*, Wayne County's glitter-camp, and the New York Dolls' vulgar charm kept the underground alive and critics wanting more.

The band was inspired by the bubblegum groups of the '60s (such as the 1910 Fruitgum Company and the Ohio Express), early Beatles and Stones hits, later Gary Glitter, T. Rex, Slade, and the Stooges. The Ramones were basically a bubblegum group with a buzz-saw sound and sicko lyrics.

*I don't wanna see your face
I don't wanna see it please
You come knockin' on my door
Gonna knock you on the floor*

Early gigs lasted only 15 minutes. Critics called it minimalism. Actually, the Ramones didn't know enough songs to do 30-minute sets. They kept churning out songs, but it didn't help because the songs only lasted a minute or two. Their first songs were inspired by a deep hatred of the mundane suburban existence it looked like they were doomed to.

Dee Dee was a crazed drug addict from Berlin who worshiped pop imagery while living the life of a criminal. Johnny was a juvenile delinquent who was disciplined at a military academy and liked to maintain an image of politeness, decorum, and structure while planning how to take over the world. Johnny and Dee Dee would hang out on the rooftops of Forest Hills, Queens, snorting Carbone and wondering where the fuck they fit into the picture. Before long the Carbone was replaced by jugs of wine, except for Dee Dee, who became a junkie.

What Johnny, Joey, and Dee Dee found in each other was the same sick sense of humor. That and the fact that rock 'n' roll seemed to be dying in front of their eyes. Together they wished for great rock 'n' roll to show them the way. Instead, they found that their twisted, humble beginnings, warped sense of humor, and dedication to mastering their musical instruments was their only way out.

"Glad to See You Go" typified the atmosphere of the times. The song was about Dee Dee's then-girlfriend, Connie

Ramone, as she was known. To put it bluntly, Connie, God rest her soul, was, uh, difficult. Until her death a few years ago from a drug overdose, she was a notorious celeb on the punk circuit. While she was going out with New York Doll Arthur Kane, she cut off his little finger with a knife. While she went with Dee Dee, she once sliced up his buttocks with a beer bottle (he couldn't sit down until the stitches were removed).

Dee Dee and Connie reigned as the king and queen of the scene. They could often be seen at CBGB's, Dee Dee usually out of it, threatening to kill people with a large club he carried. "What makes Dee Dee so distinctive?" then-manager Danny Fields was asked in a 1980 *Esquire* article. "His IQ. ... His abiding sense of decency, justice, honor, integrity, morality. ... He'll also sleep with anything, which makes him very hot."

tor at a rock station in NYC heard the reference to Charles Manson, thought the Ramones were glorifying mass murder, and refused to touch the LP with a 10-foot stylus.

The Ramones couldn't understand why anyone would be offended by songs like "Blitzkrieg Bop," "Beat on the Brat," and "Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World." They became irritated when asked about their Nazi imagery. "We're right-wingers, but we have nothing to do with the German ideology at all," Tommy said in 1976, "other than romanticism of the military." In retrospect, it's easy to understand why the Ramones used military references and metaphors in their songs. They were at war with the world. Disco music was the rage and the band had committed themselves to making rock 'n' roll kick ass again.

Getting signed was a miracle in itself. No record company in its right mind

distance and provide better rock 'n' roll than the trendier clubs. Joey prefers listening to good music to hanging out being trendy.

The conversation at the table turns to reminiscences of fucking to Ramones music as "Danny Says" builds on the jukebox and the beer flows freely. Everyone offers a story, and finally Joey is persuaded to tell one. "Yeah, I went home with this real nut once. She was nice, ya know, but she was still a nut, and she wanted to listen to us while we were in bed."

"What did she want you to play?" the whole table choruses.

Joey explodes into laughter just thinking about it: "I Wanna Be Sedated."

Maybe everything just clicked (or as Joey put it when asked how they came up with their own sound: "It's just the chemistry of the four of us—a chemical imbalance"), but when the Ramones walked into Plaza Sound recording studios in the bowels of Radio City Music Hall to record their first album and walked out a week later, history had been made. The album cost \$6,400. The record companies sat up and took notice. What they noticed scared the hell out of them. The music was faster, louder, and scarier than anything before—just when rock 'n' roll was getting safe.

By the time the second album rolled around, the Ramones were beginning to realize the long road ahead of them. "Swallow My Pride" was about signing with Sire," says Joey. "It was about how the first album didn't skyrocket. There were a lot of things that were fucked up in those days. Sire was then distributed by ABC. They really sucked. We'd fly to some city where we were gonna play and there'd be no one there to meet us at the airport. So you swallow your pride."

America wasn't ready for a band with songs like "Texas Chain Saw Massacre" and "Kill That Girl," but in England they caused a musical revolution. "But we were always concerned about good taste," Johnny claims. "There were certain songs that we'd say, 'That's not in good taste, let's not do that.' Dee Dee once had a song called 'Cripple.' We said, 'Let's leave that one for the future, if we put out a totally offensive album.' But you can write about pinheads. They're not gonna get together and organize any kind of picket line. ..."

Even though there were problems with the second album, *Leave Home*, the punk scene was exploding. Famous rock stars started dropping by CBGB's to see what all the noise was about. "I remember Lou Reed telling Johnny that he wasn't playing the right guitar," Joey said "and that he should play a different type of guitar. That didn't go over too well with John. When John found his guitar, he didn't have much money. He bought his guitar for 50 bucks 'cause that's all he had. And he liked the idea of using a Mosrite because no one else had one and he thought it would, like, become his trademark. So John thought Lou Reed was a real jerk."

The Ramones' luck began to change when they recorded *Rocket to Russia*, their third LP. On January 7, 1978, they played a sold-out show at New York's Palladium, kicking off a national tour. They had finally outgrown the Bowery.

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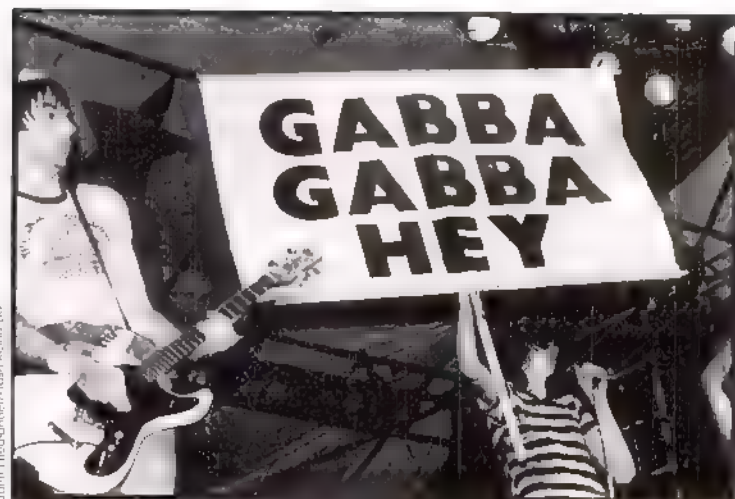
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"I know what we should be doing," says Johnny. "I don't care if it sells or not."

Everyone in and around the Ramones hated Connie. Dee Dee freely admits that if he hadn't broken up with Connie he'd be dead today.

"Dee and I came up with the song 'Glad to See You Go,' about Connie's leaving," Joey recalled.

Gonna take a chance on her
One bullet in the cylinder
And in a moment of passion
Get the glory like Charles Manson
Ya gotta go go go goodbye
Glad to see you go go go goodbye

The curse of Connie would come back to haunt the Ramones years later, when the song was released on their second album, *Leave Home*. The program direc-

Joey (right, with Johnny) hit the drums so loudly they switched him to vocals.

would sign a New York rock 'n' roll band. The New York Dolls' spectacular commercial failure left a black cloud over New York groups. No one thought the Ramones would make it. When Blue Sky records auditioned them as the opening act of a Johnny Winter concert in Connecticut, they were pelted with bottles and booed off the stage. "They're great," Clive Davis was heard to say, "but you'll never get them on wax." Even Seymour Stein, who took the plunge with them and other punk groups on his Sire label, said to independent producer and Red Star owner Mary Thau that he didn't think the Ramones could be recorded.

Joey's long, gangly body stands hunched over the jukebox in Paul's Lounge in New York's East Village. He's reading the selections like a Wall Street analyst studies the Dow Jones. His table is filled with friends. "So what do you want to do tonight?" someone asks over the plates of half-eaten cheeseburgers, shrimp scampi, raw oysters, and crabmeat in avocado. "Pig Vomit's playing the Ritz," someone answers. "King Flux is playing the Cat Club." Both are within walking

The *New York Times* reviewed them under the headline: "Ramones in the Big Time." It looked like they had finally made it.

"It was sorta like the beginning of something supposedly great. We got some heavy promotion—the stand-up cardboard cutouts—and we got buttons and stuff. We were the first band to have baseball bats for 'Beat on the Brat,' and switchblades for 'Leave Home,'" says Joey with pride.

"I remember," says Joey, "writers being afraid to interview us because they were afraid that we'd kick the shit out of them. A lot of radio stations thought that, too, which didn't make any sense."

But promotional problems were the least of their worries. Just as the Ramones were kicking off their *Rocket to Russia* tour, the Sex Pistols flew into Atlanta and turned their first and last American tour into a media circus that overshadowed the Ramones.

Punk's time had come in America. The Ramones were selling out 2,500-seat auditoriums. But one night at the Capitol Theater in New Jersey, Joey, forever plagued with sinus problems, was inhaling a vaporizer from a tea kettle, to clear up his nose and throat before going onstage, when the kettle exploded in his face. It was the beginning of a series of accidents that would continually plague him.

With each injury, Johnny would go into a frustrated frenzy and accuse Joey of goldbricking. But it wasn't until after the filming of their movie, *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, and the Phil Spector sessions in hell for the *End of the Century* album that Johnny and Joey really started to hate one another.

He always carried three guns around with him," says Johnny of Phil Spector. "He was gonna shoot us. He started a fight, you know, for publicity, a publicity stunt. He drove me to beating him up. He wanted to be punished, you know? I didn't want to. We were prisoners in his house for about six hours, and we thought we were gonna get shot. I said, 'Let's go,' and he pulled out a gun and said, 'Do you wanna leave?' I said, 'No, that's OK, we'll stay for a while.'"

Joey's side of the story about working with Spector is equally bizarre. "Phil would make us run through the song a thousand times before he'd even do one take. And then he'd get drunk. The son of the guy who owned Gold Star recording studios [the home of Spector's 'Wall of Sound' in L.A.] would bring Phil these tiny little Dixie cups of Manischewitz wine and before long Phil would be drunk out of his mind. He'd be stompin' on the floor, cursin'. 'Piss, Shit, Fuck! Piss, Shit, Fuck! Fuck this shit!' and that would be the end of the session. Really, nothin' much would get done, and then Johnny and Dee Dee didn't want to work with him no more. I really wanted to. We called a meeting and told him if he didn't stop drinking we wouldn't be able to work with him. After that he was better, but he was still... the guy's a perfectionist. He just couldn't finish things."

"You've got to be superhuman," observed Norman Mailer, "to play that stuff night after night and not have your senses wiped out by it."

Seymour Stein, president of Sire, who had just sold his label to Warner Brothers for big bucks and a seat on the board of directors, was forced to sue Spector to get back the Ramones' master tapes to have something to release.

"But I think Spector did a great job," says Joey. "But the guy is definitely nuts. I remember he'd have some hooker hanging out in the studio and he'd just insult her. She was paid for his abuse—it was crazy!"

The LP and movie finished, the band returned home to New York, Joey to a co-op on the Lower East Side, Dee Dee to his house in Queens, Johnny to his apartment on Fourth Avenue, and Marky to Brooklyn. For the first time in the Ramones' careers, they were financially independent.

The Ramones have never, even from day one, ever operated in the red. When it comes to the 3 R's, they may be "D-U-M-B, everyone's accusing me," as Joey sings, but they're not stupid. Their only concern has been writing songs, reading the trades, and adding up concert receipts.

"They wanted to succeed," says Linda Stein, Seymour's ex-wife, who once managed the band. "They wanted to sell records and tickets and make money. So they became very demanding. You can't ever be five minutes late, you can't ever not come to rehearsal, you can't ever make a mistake. I don't care if the audience is howling for encores, if you made a mistake, when you get off that stage you're being screamed at by the other Ramones. As long as you're a Ramone, there's no room to misbehave or get yourself screwed up. I mean, it's like a Nazi army!"

It was Tommy who first set up the rules. He was more than just a drummer who happened to be spokesman for the group, he was the Boss. What Tommy said, everyone did. Interviews were tortuous affairs, during which Tommy would refuse to answer specific questions, trying to promote the Ramones Myth. All members of the band had to be present. No solo interviews were permitted. Johnny would join in, but Tommy ran the show: "No, none of the other Ramones had been in rock groups before. Yes, the Ramones are like brothers, everyone sitting around writing songs together. No, no one writes a song by themselves."

It was a peculiar form of utopian communism that Tommy liked to project, especially from a self-professed right-wing group. One can only wonder if Dee Dee had been allowed to talk about

chicken-hawking on 53rd and Third or packing a 9-mm. Walther P-38 automatic and Johnny throwing TV sets off rooftops, would the world have been confused about who really started punk—the English or the Americans.

When Tommy left the Ramones after *Rocket to Russia's* release (to be replaced by heavy metal drummer Mark Bell), the band lost its authority figure. Slowly all the rules began to change. Joey, Dee Dee, and Johnny chafed under the Ramones Myth and eventually began taking individual songwriting credits. They fired Danny Fields, their original manager, and Linda Stein, and then signed with Gary Kurfirst, who was managing Talking Heads. By the time the Spector album, *End of the Century*, was finally released in March 1980, Johnny and Joey had stopped speaking.

"There have been times when no one in the band has been speaking to each other," says Danny Fields, "but they go out and play, and as a member of the audience you won't know that and that is my definition of professionalism."

The Ramones were smart enough to realize that if they didn't leave the personal shit behind they'd never make it. After 13 years of heroin addiction, even Dee Dee realized that it was time to clean up. "I used to think I had to live the life of a

punk rocker to be authentic, but I learned from watching Sid Vicious die. Drugs are dangerous." In addition to his constant struggle to stay drug-free, Dee Dee acted as mediator between Johnny and Joey, and always found himself being asked to choose sides.

Johnny decided to take control of the band. He threatened to break up the group unless things were done his way. He hated the reaction to their album, *Pleasant Dreams*, and he despised the direction the band was moving in. "I mean," he said, "there were albums where I became totally disinterested and didn't write anything on it, like *Pleasant Dreams*. The Ramones were losing the respect we'd earned throughout the years. So then I started to fight for things, demanding, 'I'm not continuing anymore unless we do this or that.'"

One of the things he demanded was that Mark Bell (né Ramone) be replaced. Mark had a serious drug and alcohol problem, and his condition added to the tensions in a band in which no one was speaking to each other. Soon, Marky was thrown out.

Another thing Johnny demanded was a new approach to the Ramones' music. That is, an OLD approach to the

continued on p. 78



Joey hanging out near his refrigerator trying to avoid being trendy.



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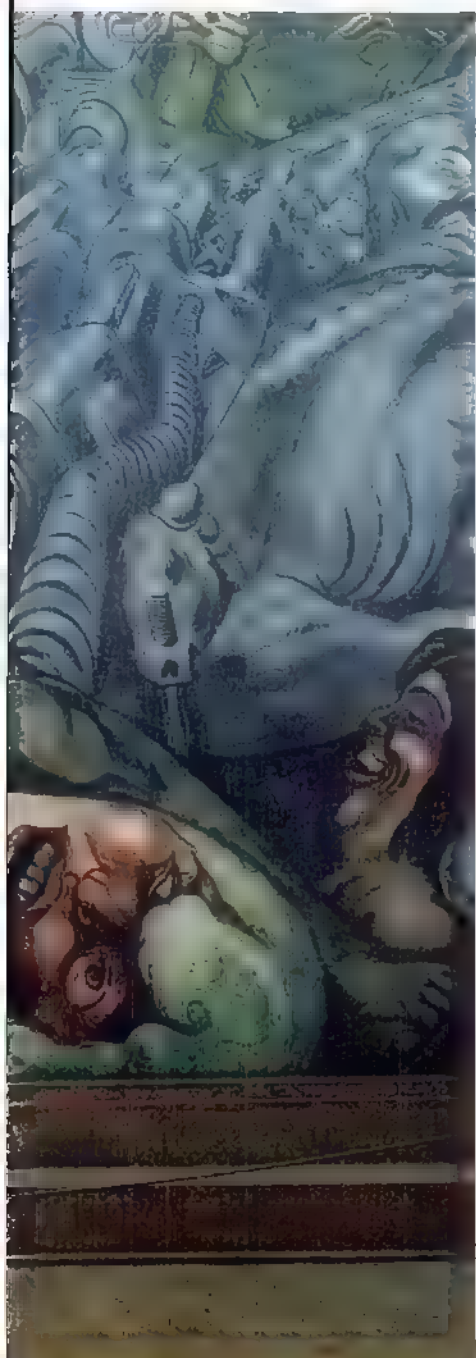
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UNDER THE KILLING



When Mexican drug lords kidnapped and killed a US agent, the US and the Mexicans got tough. But the desperate, murderous *narcotraficantes* got tougher, and in a dark forest on the eve of the celebration of death, they got even.

Article by Ruben Hernandez, Jr.

By 2 o'clock on the morning of *Día de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead, the 19 Mexican narcotics agents had finished loading their trucks and vans with the bales of marijuana they had grabbed on an anonymous phone tip that would have aroused the suspicions of more cautious drug agents. During the two-hour ride from the town of Coatzacoatz to the marijuana field, the men—municipal policemen, federal judicial agents, and soldiers—talked of the parties and other celebrations they'd been invited to on the holiday observing the inevitability of death. Now, as the convoy lumbered onto the road back to Coatzacoatz, the talk returned to parties and women.

The dirt road, transformed into a thick mud by heavy rains, sucked at their tires and slowed them. Now and then a vehicle would slide off the narrow road into the thick bushes.

Suddenly, the damp November night flashed with machine-gun fire, seemingly coming from everywhere at once in the dense forest. Metallic thuds sounded, then the softer thump of bullets smacking flesh, then came the screams of wounded men.

At 6'4", 220 lbs. of gang-scarred Chicano, I'm not usually paranoid. But I tend to be wary in Mexico. Everything about it had changed. Take Guadalajara. It was once a gentle place. But Guadalajara isn't the first sophisticated lady that drugs have turned into a whore. This grand old capital city of the state of Jalisco, the "Paris of Mexico," is now the hangout of Mexico's most powerful and ruthless drug lords, brutish dealers suddenly rich with millions in drug money who have moved here from their bases in poorer states like Sinaloa and Sonora, drawn by the urban culture and entertainment.

In Guadalajara four years ago two tourists from the Midwest wandered into La Langosta restaurant looking for authentic Mexican food and stumbled into the middle of a cocaine orgy hosted by Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernest Fonseca, two of the biggest and craziest

narcotraficantes in Mexico. The drunken, coked-up dealers mistook the two for US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents and strong-armed them into the kitchen, where they tortured and stabbed them, then buried them in La Primavera forest.

A year later, a real DEA agent, Enrique Camarena Salazar, and his assistant, Alfredo Zavala Avelar, were kidnapped on a busy Guadalajara street, tortured for three days, beaten to death, and sunk beneath the moist Jalisco soil.

The death toll of government agents and innocent citizens was high and rising. Any visions I had of my hotel door being kicked in by armed *narcotraficantes* were partly the fault of my Mexican friend Luis. I had phoned from Phoenix to tell him I was coming and the story I was working on: the massacre of 17 narcotics agents. I asked if he could help me navigate the tangled Mexican bureaucracy and the knuckle-whitening Mexico City traffic. *No problema*, he replied. Then he casually laid my first lead on me.

"I grew up with one of those murdered policemen, you know. I found out about it through my grandmother, who called to tell me my friend Kiki had been killed, and how horrible the whole thing was. He was about 27, my age, and the black sheep of the family. He was the type that would have become a rock star if he hadn't decided to join the Mexican army. A real rebel.

"He hung around with a bunch of hard-ass types; the Mexican army equivalent of your Green Berets. After his army duty, he worked for the police, volunteering for the drug squads. His wife told me he'd go off on missions for days, but he always called as soon as he could. Except this time.

"His wife said the bodies were so badly mutilated, the only way his older brother Bruno recognized the body was because of the jewelry he always wore. The Mexican government was so embarrassed by this whole thing, they wouldn't release the bodies to the families."

MOON

It was embarrassed by something else far more disturbing. There had been two survivors of the massacre on the killing shore of the Choapas River. Two policemen. They attributed their good fortune to luck. But many suspected otherwise, that they had been the inside men on the setup and had tipped the *narcotraficantes* of the impending raid. They were jailed briefly, then released when police were unable to charge them with anything but being alive.

Screams of protest jolt me from my light sleep. Not in my head this time, but coming from the street below my Mexico City hotel room. The outcry fuses with the background wail of an ambulance siren to create a penetrating pitch rising above the din of street noises. The siren fades, and I realize that the shouting is only a street-corner argument. Still, I was hoping I would dream through my third night here in the Hotel Diligencias. The sky-high altitude (Mexico City is more than a mile above sea level) and the world's most noxious smog have crystallized a tension ball in the middle of my brain.

Outside my sixth-floor window the flashing clock atop the 30-story Banco Latinoamericano Building reads 3:30. Three-thirty in the morning, and 100 feet below, Calle Belisario Domínguez is crowded with hundreds of people. On an avenue made hazy yellow from lingering hydrocarbons and dingy street lights, peddlers have spread out blankets and set up stands to hawk their wares. Sidewalk kitchens sell pungent animal tripe or *tortas* or *tacos*, and costumed mariachi players from nearby Garibaldi Plaza dart in and out of the slow-moving stream of traffic, bulldogging the cars for potential customers.

To call all this business a living is really too charitable. Surviving is a 24-hour job in the city of 18 million. The *Chilangos* (the nickname for capital citizens) who are sleeping now will awake to take the place of these graveyard-shift workers.

At least the next shift rests—unlike me. A recurring nightmare chips at me, fueled partly by the headline in the night edition of *El Universal*, which blares: **THREE TEACHERS ASSASSINATED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS.**

Drug-murder announcements are regular items on front pages nowadays.

Jesús Cabrera, the unit comandante, shouted for the

bewildered convoy to halt. The hysterical men returned fire from inside and beside their vehicles, but most of their bullets struck trees or zipped blindly through the brush. After 15 minutes the shooting trailed off, then died. The only sound remaining was the barked orders of the withdrawing ambushers. Cabrera counted four of his men seriously wounded.

He shouted for his shaken men to proceed to a farm he knew 11 miles away. The fleeing police and soldiers had gone about five miles and were skirting a hill when suddenly they were attacked a second time by an enemy made invisible by the moonless night and thick forest. Again the fusillade faded to silence. This time, three of Cabrera's men slumped dead in their trucks.

His voice tinged with new urgency, Cabrera ordered his men to abandon their trucks and vans and try to walk through the cover of forest, carrying the wounded.

Tell me, loco, why are you coming all the way to Mexico City? To get yourself killed? Don't they have drug dealers in Arizona?"

"Sure, but none with the balls of your local talent. Ours only shoot one or two police at a time."

"Seventeen is too much," he said, "even for Mexico. That and all the other bad news that's hit us. The government doesn't like to talk about the drug killings; they say it fucks up tourism. And they don't pamper journalists here like they do in the United States. You'll have to step careful, like a bullfighter."

A few days after the massacre, CBS news correspondent George Nathanson and his cameraman tried to reach the site on the Choapas River. Three Mexican soldiers stepped out of the bushes and ordered them to turn back. When Nathanson gave them his "free press" spiel, they cocked their rifles and leveled them at his chest. Nathanson turned back. Later he told another correspondent that the incident was worrisome, because in his many years of covering Mexico, it had never happened before. But then, Mexico hadn't had a catastrophic year like 1985 since the revolution, and a lot of things have changed here.

Things are tough all over for the long-suffering Mexicans—67 percent inflation, devaluation of the peso until you could buy 480 for a dollar, 40 percent unemployment, increasing political violence, and a

\$100 billion debt on foreign loans—but nowhere were they as tough as in Mexico City, the government and intellectual capital of the country. Mexico City rests on the palm of a plateau 7,400 feet above sea level. Mountains and dead volcanoes encircle it like giant stubby fingers, trapping a perpetual smog.

Concern about the poison smog was overshadowed September 29, when the great stony hand clenched, crumbling the frail foundation on which Mexico City stood. At least 10,000 people died in the great earthquake, and thousands fled into the street. About 40,000 people still live today in tents and cardboard shacks, waiting for the promised reconstruction of their homes.

Mexicans don't ask what can happen next anymore.

The American embassy official looks like a midwesterner. He runs his hand through his straw-colored hair as he asks me not to use his name in my article.

"I'm not saying something like this police massacre couldn't happen in the States, say in the mountains of northern California where they grow marijuana. But this ambush was a surprise to everyone. What made the killing of those policemen particularly disturbing is that the drug runners were serving notice. Before, the drug runners would let us have the dope and run; that's why we called them 'drug runners.' We got the goods, they got away. There were no confrontations. This time they decided to stay and shoot it out."

"Another thing that's worrying us and the Mexican government is the extent to which the drug runners are arming themselves. They're buying arms on the international arms market. Getting pretty sophisticated, too. They have Uzis, for instance. In fact, it's often said that many of these drug lords are better protected than President de la Madrid."

"You know," continues the embassy guy, "the Veracruz *narcotraficantes* mutilated the corpses of those police pretty bad. That happens a lot here. The killers are often unfeeling. It's because of their Aztec and Olmec origins, and can be traced back to the old human sacrifices."

The last comment catches me off guard, and I look up from my notes. I hadn't heard the "blood seed" mythos of why Mexicans kill each other for years. But here it was. O warrior priests of Tenochtitlan, will

Two tourists wandered into a cocaine orgy hosted by two of the biggest, craziest *narcotraficantes*, and ended up buried in La Primavera forest.





Above and opposite: The Choapas River massacre was a brutal warning to Mexican and American drug agents not to interfere with the narcotraficantes.

Mexico ever be free of you?

Intimidation is a better rationale for narcotraficantes chopping and grating dead men as brutal warnings of terrifying retribution.

About 9:30 that morning the devastated agents, muddled and exhausted, reached the farm and hid in a store. Supplies on the shelves were low, but the hungry men were able to find cookies and soda.

As they rested, weary from the flight, 30 of the gunmen who had been relentlessly following them surrounded the store and opened fire with powerful rifles, semiautomatic weapons, and pistols. Four more police died in a hailstorm of bullets. The surviving 12 fired sporadically to keep the attackers from rushing, but they were running out of bullets.

"Stop shooting . . . enough!" comandante Cabrera yelled out the door. "Let's meet like men. There is no reason for any of our men to be killed."

Antonio Aurelio Sanchez, the narcotraficante leader, shouted from the forest for Cabrera to come out unarmed. As Sanchez emerged from the thick foliage, his men kept their barrels pointed at Cabrera while he and Sanchez talked a truce. Give up your weapons and the cargo of marijuana taken from his field, Sanchez told Cabrera, and we'll let your men go. Cabrera went back inside to explain the terms to his men, who quickly agreed. Once outside, the police and soldiers bantered with their captors as they surrendered their rifles and pistols, too tired to see what was coming next.

After the embassy interview, I walk to the nearest bar, where I sit sipping a Corona and digesting the conversation. I had asked the embassy man about the corruption of Mexican officials and police, and he had refused to talk, even off the record. "I've got to work with these guys," he said.

One reason he may have ducked the question is that US law enforcement officials believe that the millions flowing through the drug industry also flow through the hands of many Mexican government officials and police. "Wherever you put your finger,"

an attorney general said in Alan Riding's book *Distant Neighbors*, "pus comes out." Corruption, says Riding, is the "grease that makes the Mexican system work and the glue that holds it together."

But the system came unglued last year with the murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. It also set in motion the events that would lead to the dark massacre on the eve of the Day of the Dead.

Veteran DEA agent Enrique Camarena had stumbled onto something so big that it even frightened him, and he had lived for several years under the white-hot tension of being a narcotics agent in the most vicious anti-nark capital in the world. According to DEA agents, Camarena was about to blow the covers of highly placed Mexican officials who had been bought off by drug dealers. On the night of March 3, 1985, Camarena scheduled a meeting with an informant to receive the final piece of information he needed to seal the case. As he and his assistant left his apartment in Mexico City and walked along the crowded boulevard to the meeting, he was suddenly swept into a car, which quickly drove away. Their mutilated bodies were found three days later.

The brazen murders sparked anger among US officials. The killers had recorded the torture-murders and sent the tape to Mexican investigators as a warning. The Mexicans identified the man supervising the torture as an official of the federal judicial police. But no move was made to arrest him.

Finally, the US government acted. Relentless pressure on the Mexicans led to the arrest of Rafael Caro Quintero, called "Capo" Caro, one of the powerful drug overlords, for the murder of Camarena. But Quintero had not been in custody long when, with the help of the warden, several employees of the prison, and three cops, he escaped a Tijuana prison and fled to Costa Rica.

The US pursued. Bowing to increased political muscle by the US ambassador to Mexico, former actor John Gavin, the Costa Ricans extradited Quintero back to Mexico. He returned, not to the harsh treatment that students trying to smuggle packets of marijuana and cocaine suffer but to the comfortable handling accorded powerful, wealthy, and dangerous drug dealers who command the fear and respect of prison officials. Quintero lived in a

As the narcotics agents began the drive back to town after loading the bales of marijuana, suddenly the quiet November night was rent by machine-gun fire and the screams of wounded men.

luxury cell and was often seen at the finest Mexico City restaurants during his frequent dinner furloughs. When Quintero was spotted by Mexico City reporters on one of his nights out, the government, stung by criticism of his relative freedom, raided his cell and confiscated more than \$750,000 in cash.

Furious at all this, the DEA, which until then had maintained a low and relatively unobtrusive profile in Mexico, got mean. The US spent millions on planes and helicopters to spot and destroy marijuana and poppy fields in the rugged mountainous regions of northern Mexico. With the assistance of the embarrassed Mexican government, thousands of acres of opium poppies used in making heroin were destroyed. Cocaine busts increased by 500 percent. Everywhere, agents relentlessly pursued smugglers and dealers and their suppliers and customers. The narcos were hurting. And so they decided to hurt back.

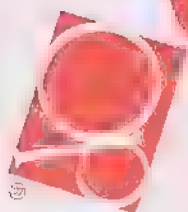
In late October, an anonymous caller revealed to Mexican narcotics agents the site of a massive marijuana-smuggling storehouse. The tip became the bait that lured 19 narcs deep into the Coatzacoatzas jungle on the night of October 31, 1985.

After Cabrera's men surrendered their weapons, Sanchez, the leader of the narcotraficantes, shouted for his men to tie the agents' hands and feet. The bound agents were dragged a short distance away to the Choapas River and pushed onto boats moored there. The ride down the glassy green river ended at a remote and hidden shore, where Cabrera and his men were dumped sprawling on their bellies.

Then Sanchez took an M1 rifle from one of his underlings, placed it to the head of the nearest prisoner, and pulled the trigger. The remaining men began to plead, protest, and cry. One by one, Sanchez executed the bound and screaming men, shouting curses all the time.

All but two were killed. He ordered them released so they could tell the story of the massacre. After all the others were dead, he ordered his men to keep shooting the bodies, then to chop them with machetes. Finishing their bloody chore, the narcotraficantes disappeared back into the forest, heading for the marijuana in the abandoned convoy and afterward to the closest town, to celebrate their gruesome victory on Dia de los Muertos.

WINTER URF FOR CALIFORNIA COOL.



This month, Cisco and Egbert look at some Very Artistic videos that should be commercials. But then again, they are.

CISCO: Hi, I'm Gene Cisco, rock video critic of *The Middletown Daily Mirror*.

EGBERT: And I'm Roger Egbert, rock video critic of *The Middletown Star-Ledger*.

CISCO: This month At the Videos we'll be seeing videos by Nu Shooz, the Cars, Martini Ranch, Peter Gabriel, and the Fixx.

EGBERT: But first we have Modern English, "Ink and Paper." This one's really artistic.

CISCO: It's a video "Dear John" letter. You know, I collect "Dear John" letters.

EGBERT: "Dear John, it's over. I don't love you, I'm sorry. It's no use hanging on."

CISCO: These guys are dressed like a SWAT team. I guess John wants her eliminated.

EGBERT: The SWATs look sort of halfway between David Bowie and Jethro Tull.

CISCO: Now they're writing "NO" and "Do not call me" in neon.

EGBERT: This video is as sharply photographed as an Alka-Seltzer commercial. It screams graphics, doesn't it?

CISCO: What?

EGBERT: This is a video that understands type. I mean, it's actually a pretty good use of type, don't you think?

CISCO: Yeah, that girl is just my type.

EGBERT: I think that if the marines are looking for a few good men, they should watch MTV. Look at this drummer. He looks like a marine. There are a few good women in this video, too.

CISCO: I'm waiting for the marines to come out with their own video. Don't they have a marching band?

EGBERT: Next we have "I Can't Wait" by Nu Shooz. This is a great disco song, and it stars the family dog, who's a regular family dog except that he wears shades. Nu Shooz sound like they're from the ghetto in Philadelphia, but they look like they're from the Ford Modeling Agency. CISCO: This girl looks like a receptionist there.

EGBERT: She's got a beautiful old '50s drip coffeepot—or is it a percolator?

CISCO: It's a percolator. The girl's a drip. EGBERT: She just pulled a baby shark out of it.

CISCO: Is that a cactus she's got in her office?

EGBERT: Yeah. She's got a cactus and some volcanoes. It's the kind of cactus you see in all the cowboy movies. This song reminds me a lot of Lipps Inc.

CISCO: Nu Shooz sounds like Lipps Inc.?

EGBERT: Yeah. "Funkytown." It's your average black music with white female vocalists. The video is very art-directed, and it's nice. It's kind of kitschy. I mean, it's definitely all about kitsch, except it's restrained and minimal. It's one of the genre of videos directed by people who wanted to be graphic designers or interior

designers, not film directors. They're into super graphics. They would rather be designing alarm clocks.

CISCO: Next we have the Cars, "Tonight She Comes." This is kind of scary. It's op art. It seems all the Cars videos are op art.

EGBERT: No, some of them are pop art. CISCO: The band is posed in front of various optical illusions.

EGBERT: We have seen similar motifs in Tom Petty's Alice in Wonderland videos. This is pretty good. They'll probably get another Academy Award for this one. Also, I'd say Ric Ocasek looks better than he's ever looked in his life, which may come from living with Paulina, the most beautiful woman in the world.

CISCO: Will she be in this video?

EGBERT: I hope so. Is that her?

CISCO: No, I think that's the second or third most beautiful girl in the world.

EGBERT: Some guys have all the luck. Thankfully, this video is completely devoid of any message or meaning.

CISCO: It's all polka-dotted legs and black-and-white-striped lips.

EGBERT: Yep. All the things you'd rather be concerned with.

Next we have Martini Ranch, "How Can the Laboring Man Find Time for Self-Culture?"

CISCO: This is my kind of band, although I don't have a clue what this video is about. Is that a heavily tattooed man or a yuppie in a really colorful sweater?

EGBERT: He's a prisoner of technology, right out of Fritz Lang. This is very sophisticated. It's Devo and Kraftwerk rolled into one.

CISCO: Now we see some workers. I love work. I could sit here and watch these laborers with their pickaxes all day.

EGBERT: It's better than seeing muscle men, but it's really the same effect. The workers are all girls, or turning into girls. This could be the most important new band in the world. If this were an ad, I'd go out and buy whatever they're selling.

CISCO: The next video is by Peter Gabriel, "Sledgehammer."

EGBERT: This shows the beginning of life: sperm, cum on a microscope, fallopian tubes, embryos, white corpuscles, red corpuscles, lymph, lips, fingertips, earlobes, eyelids, mouths, teeth...

CISCO: It's Peter Gabriel. Do you think you know him any better now? This video is really great. Now he's pretending his head is a planet, and there's an electric train riding on the ring around it.

EGBERT: He's also pretending he's René Magritte, Huey Lewis, and Solomon Burke, all at the same time.

CISCO: Is that Candyland behind him?

EGBERT: I think it's Kenny Scharf. You know, we're seeing a lot more rhythmic editing, right on the beat. It's the new trend. This is another triumph of design.



Peter Simon/Rainco Ltd.

CISCO: Wow. Pete just went through a million fashion changes within a second. Who are his backup singers?

EGBERT: Those are the Ikettes.

CISCO: No, there's too many of them.

EGBERT: All the Ikettes throughout history.

CISCO: This video is like a department store of graphic-art tricks.

EGBERT: Didn't it look like it cost \$8 million to make?

CISCO: Yes, but worth every penny of it. Our last video this month is the Fixx, "Secret Separation."

EGBERT: This is another genre video. We've seen this a million times before. It's the Thunderdome look, the junkyard in the airplane hanger where everything's rigged up on scaffolding and you see every piece of fucking junk in the goddamn universe. It's really stupid.

CISCO: The exact opposite of the last

I got a girlfriend who's better than that: Ric Ocasek feeling groovy about going out with the most beautiful woman in the world.

video we saw, by Peter Gabriel, where every image was fresh and new.

EGBERT: Here we see a human in a gerbil treadmill in a garage filled with a zillion pieces of metal junk, and we're not impressed. They're in a fix, and that's the fix they're in. They're the gerbils on the rock 'n' roll treadmill, prisoners of their haircuts.

CISCO: Well, that's it for this month. See you next time At the Videos.

Gene Cisco and Roger Egbert go to the same barbershop as Scott Cohen and Glenn O'Brien.

Ramones' music.

One of the sore spots between Joey and Johnny is that Joey wants a hit, and Johnny doesn't care. "All I wanna do," Johnny said after the release of *Subterranean Jungle*, "is play the songs the kids wanna hear. Sometimes I don't wanna be in the band anymore. Being with the same people and hearing the same conversation over and over—'Oh, this record's gonna sell, we're gonna have a hit and all that.' I can't listen to that stuff. I know what we should be doing. I don't care whether it sells or not."

That, says Johnny, was why the band took a new direction, starting with "Psychotherapy" from *Subterranean Jungle*, which he wrote with Dee Dee. "I wanted to do a hardcore song to show the hardcore people that we can play as fast or faster than they can. Nobody plays faster than us."

Joey is as apathetic about hardcore as he is enthusiastic about the prospects of having a hit. "For the most part," he says, "I just hear it [hardcore] all sounding the same. I really don't hear anything that's earth-shattering or that knocks me out."

As much as hardcore has helped their career, it has also hurt it. As wonderful, amazing, and horrifying as slam-dancing is to watch, it takes a toll on people who practice it, and the groups who play the music for it. Monty, the Ramones' road

manager who always deals with whatever mess the group creates, says that the slam-dancing that goes on at Ramones concerts has made it difficult for them to get booked into clubs.

"I've had club owners just freak out. Their security just goes crazy. They go right into the audience, grab these people and throw them out."

"How do you explain what's gonna be goin' on? 'Well, we're gonna have a bunch of kids who will jump off the stage and land on their backs, and they're also gonna be in the middle, slammin' into each other... Some of these people are girls! They get hurt and they wanna stop the show. People get hurt! I don't understand why they wanna do this. They wanna be part of the show, but why do it, so you can hurt people? And we get blamed for everything. It's sick. You figure it out. I can't. It's getting worse, I'll tell you."

In 1985, just when things looked their bleakest, the Ramones' luck began to change. They signed a new contract with Sire/Warner Bros. and with Tommy Erdelyi and Ed Stasium producing, released *Too Tough to Die*, which revealed for the first time their political awareness.

"We had watched Reagan going to visit the SS cemetery on TV and were disgusted," says Joey. "We're all good Amer-

icans, but Reagan's thing was like forgive and forget. How can you forget six million people being gassed and roasted?" he spits out, still indignant over Reagan's betrayal. The resulting single, "Bonzo Goes to Bitburg," was a huge success with the critics and elevated the band that had once romanticized the military with songs like "Commando" to politically correct status.

"Joey is one of the first guys I called when I was putting together 'Sun City,'" remembers Steven Van Zandt. "I thought 'Bonzo' was a great record. I've been a Ramones fan from the first album. I hate the idea of things being disposable like the English punk scene. The thing that is endearing about the Ramones is that they last."

Finally getting respect and kudos from their peers, the band toured England in 1985 and played festivals throughout Europe, and suddenly Joey and Johnny started having fun together again. "Things are great when it's just the band," laughs Joey. "It's the girls who cause all the shit. Girls are troublemakers."

If the Ramones' English tour in '85 was a smash, their 1986 romp across the UK caused pandemonium. While *Too Tough to Die* was a return to good old punk rock with a few hardcore songs thrown in, the new album, *Animal Boy*, is a perfect blend of Johnny's raw power, Dee Dee's lunacy, and Joey's pop sensibilities. It entered the English charts at 31. It only takes

12 years of constant bullshit before you become an overnight sensation: 12 hard years of one-night stands and cranking out great albums that asshole DJs refuse to play because they're not hip enough to get the joke; 12 years of traveling with your delinquent pals from Forest Hills to show the world how real rock 'n' roll is played; 12 years of playing music fast enough to rip through the sound barrier and not have your senses completely wiped out. When you're a Ramone it takes the rest of the world 12 years to catch up with you.

"You know, people always talk about how good those CBGB's days were," says Joey. "Well, those days sucked. I'm a lot happier now. I mean, I like things now." He starts to laugh when he thinks of the piles of dog shit that used to litter the floor of CBGB's. "I mean, anything is better than that."

*Sitting here in Queens
Eating refried beans
Reading all the magazines
Gulping down Thorazines
We ain't got no friends
No Christmas cards to send
Our troubles never end
Daddy likes men
We're a happy family
We're a happy family
We're a happy family
Me, mom, and daddy
— "We're a Happy Family" ●*

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BOB GELDOF'S RESPONSE TO SPIN'S LIVE AID ARTICLE

U.N. Photo/Ray Wilkin



Every day for a month, often several times a day, we tried to interview Bob Geldof in response to our findings for Bob Keating's article "Live Aid: The Terrible Truth," published in last month's SPIN. At one point we arranged for questions to be sent to him in England which he would answer by cassette sent back to us. For all our efforts, he didn't respond.

On June 10th we held a press conference in New York to answer questions about the story and give the press the opportunity to question three relief experts who were valuable sources for our reporting. Dr. Rony Brauman, president of *Medicins sans Frontières*, (Doctors Without Borders), a French medical relief group which was thrown out of Ethiopia by the government for refusing to remain silent about the atrocities it witnessed; Dr. Jason Clay, anthropologist and director of research for Cultural Survival, an organization that works with tribal societies and investigates human rights abuses; and Bonnie Holcomb, an anthropologist who has worked extensively with famine victims in Africa, especially Ethiopian refugees who have fled to Sudan.

Prior to the conference, we sent the printed magazine with the article to Bob Geldof and within 48 hours he issued the following statement to the press. The small footnote numbers are ours and correspond to our comments about the various inaccuracies in the statement.

"It is not possible for the Ethiopian government to have received any Live Aid money except with the connivance and complicity of aid agencies operating in Ethiopia¹ such as OXFAM, CARE, Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, and all other beneficiaries of Live Aid money including *Medicins sans Frontières* itself.² And this is unlikely. Perhaps, MSF are privy to information Live Aid/Band Aid and other agencies are not.³ This is a politically fraught area of the Horn of Africa, therefore, subject to misinformation campaigns constantly perpetrated by the interested parties in Ethiopia, Tigre, and Eritrea. Most probably consciously abetted by outside agencies and now unfortunately and almost certainly innocently, MSF seems to have allowed itself to be used as pawns. Agencies are supposed to help people regardless of their frontiers and political beliefs. If people are suffering, you help.

"MSF, unfortunately got evicted for their outspoken political views,⁴ thus depriving them of their one justifiable function—to help the sick and dying. They seem to have embarked on a war of attrition based on certain debatable factors. Indeed, within MSF itself there has been one ideological split between its founder, Bernard Katsner, and some others.⁵ Bernard has now formed *Medicins du*

Monde with whom Live Aid in France shares its office in Paris.⁶

"Certainly, one cannot stay silent about political atrocities, criminality, or corruption. But I think most people would agree silent I have not been, discussing these and other topics with the most senior government officials of these countries in private and on both British and American television.⁷

"If the MSF story is an attempt to discredit us, make us appear naïve or at best irresponsible, it is a matter of public record that this cannot possibly be the case.⁸ On the other hand, by our own nonoperational status in the field, we are free to pursue such a course of action without hindering the flow of money to the agencies and through them to the people most in need. Unlike MSF, they cannot throw us out, because we are not there. Unlike MSF, we can say what we like, where it is most effective. And even MSF must agree we sometimes get results simply because we have the money. Unlike MSF, we have done this from the start. I said as early as January 1985,⁹ I will shake hands with the devil on my left and on my right to get to the people we are meant to help. Unlike MSF, wounded pride does not come into it. Live Aid helps those in Tigre, Eritrea, and Ethiopia itself through whatever channels are available to us. If it is truly medicine without frontiers, how come they are erecting their own ideological borders? They will cite their own expertise and experience as being the basis of justification behind their claims, but I have heard from so many experts these past months, and for their expertise and experience the problems still remain.¹⁰ The dying continues and the immense suffering stays unchecked. Meanwhile, MSF holds press conferences to aid the flagging circulation of a pop magazine.¹¹"

SPIN'S RESPONSE:

1. That's a big exception. Our report showed the abuse of relief aid was widespread, from trucks to food, and if Live Aid-funded agencies were in turn exploited, then Live Aid indisputably fed into the system of relief exploitation.

2. *Medicins sans Frontières* has not received one dollar of Live Aid money.

3. Because of their involvement in the field prior to expulsion, MSF do have valuable experience they could share with Live Aid, but no one from Live Aid has ever bothered to contact MSF.

4. MSF was not expelled for adopting a political stance, which they don't do anywhere in the world, but for speaking out against intense human rights violations.

5. The split occurred eight years ago, and, obviously, had nothing to do with Ethiopia,

despite Geldof's implication. Within MSF were two camps of thought: one group wanted to stress human rights and the other field work. Bernard Katsner broke away to form *Medicins du Monde* and Dr. Rony Brauman and Claude Malhuret (who was quoted in our article) concentrated MSF on field work.

Last December, just after MSF was kicked out of Ethiopia, *Medicins du Monde* issued a statement supporting MSF's stand against the atrocities in Ethiopia.

6. As we understand, *Medicins du Monde* is so dissatisfied with Live Aid's approach to Ethiopia that a rift has grown between them and some in MDM are anxious to ask Live Aid to leave the shared offices.

7. While Geldof may have spoken about the difficult political climate in Ethiopia, it is only as vaguely as that, which is why our story was so shocking. People just did not know the scope and Geldof did nothing to enlighten them.

8. The point of the story was not to discredit Live Aid. That would serve no point whatsoever. It was not MSF's story—it was an independent investigation by SPIN, and MSF sources were interviewed along with several others.

9. MSF was active in the field in Ethiopia nine months before Geldof made his first statements in January 1985.

10. All three experts who formed our press conference panel and who have such invaluable experience in and knowledge of Ethiopia and famine were unsuccessful in repeated attempts to talk to Bob Geldof and his key people. When Bonnie Holcomb wrote to Band Aid about her concern regarding their actions, she received a T-shirt and Live Aid pin in reply.

11. SPIN, not MSF, called the press conference and invited Brauman, Holcomb, and Clay to attend. Brauman flew from Paris for the day to be there. Throughout his statement, Geldof refused to directly address any of the facts of the article. He did not deny our findings, but attempted instead to deflect attention towards *Medicins sans Frontières* who, beyond what they have to say in the article and other interviews, were not the point of the story, which was to show what has really happened to relief aid in Ethiopia.

Bob Geldof makes one point we totally agree with: "The dying continues and the immense suffering stays unchecked." How long will it go on? At least as long as we pretend it isn't so. We can't stop the problems in Ethiopia until we know and understand what the causes are.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

would bring him to the New School, and would try to say how his role was underplayed, and whatever. The guy who wrote the *New York* magazine article, a guy named Bob Daley . . . Bob Daley called me in the hospital, after I was shot, and he was overcome with joy. This was fantastic, that he had this ending to his story, that I had gotten shot, you see . . . He wanted to write the book. Now he ended up writing this book, *Prince of the City*, with Bob Leuci. I know Bob Leuci from way back when, and . . . this one program wanted me on the air, this is just a few weeks ago, and then they had Bob Leuci on there, and I mean, people have absolutely no conception of what Bob Leuci was. I mean, it might have shown a little bit of it in the book. Bob Leuci was one of the narcotics enforcers; he was a guy that was taking money, beatin' up, breakin' heads, and he is the guy that was like a real turncoat, because he turned in his own buddies that he was breakin' bread with. And now he holds himself up, and the thing has gotten so distorted that people think he's some kind of Serpico or somethin' . . . so I figure, hey, if people want to know the truth, they'll know the truth, and hearing the truth doesn't change anything."

"Yeah, but truth by example changes things."

"Well, that's true. But what I end up telling everybody at the end, when I say I'm not gonna do an interview, is, I'm not the only guy here. There's corruption in every walk of life. That's the other point. Why do they always want to single out cops? This was my awakening—that after the police, everything that I got involved with, vis à vis the movie people, the writing people—come on, anybody that's makin' money is cutting throats. These people with the big houses and big budgets—they got to break their ass to . . . can you hold on a second? [He gets the other phone and is away for a minute] Hi. Um . . . but it's very interesting, because I believe life throws you in certain situations . . . I mean, where this woman ripped me off for my pension . . . life for me has become simplified. I don't own my own house. You know, if I wanted to buy a house I wouldn't be able to pay the taxes on it, and so I go along this way, and my life has become very simplified. And I'm at somebody's house here; I feel like a big exec up here, with all these phones. They're not my phones, and I'm sitting in this guy's house, and . . . and that's it. And people reach me from the strangest places. And . . . so [sighs] I hope I, uh, put a little light in whatever it was you were wondering about."

"Can I ask you one more question? When you were going through that period before you got shot, with all that isolation, did you have a God that you prayed to? Did you believe in a God?"

"Well, it's interesting, because you said, someplace in your letter, that I was lookin' for God, you know? It seemed for the longest time that I was, because I was told that's what you're supposed to look for, but I don't know; I guess at that time I really didn't have time to pray, or think of anything else. The reality was driven home to me that, uh, you know, it was me, and that was it. So I guess in that regard it gave me a lot of strength. You know, this business about praying to God and all this—I believe in being in tune with your environment. And that's that 'Be here now.' I went through a whole Ram Dass thing. I'm not espousing Ram Dass or anything, but there was a time in my life when I was looking for an answer, and it was very clumsy, and yet I found so many other people, so many different cults, that when you come through the whole thing, you see it was really just a bunch of crap. A very dear friend of mine committed suicide as a result of it. And so I got this antagonistic approach towards cult people, and I'm talking about, especially, Castaneda, you know, with his bullshit. I mean, he's a fantastic novelist, he's a good writer, but what does the poor shmoe know who's

reading it and trying to make it happen to him? I mean, it just fucks up his mind completely. Everybody's looking, like they're gonna get the ultimate high, and then they're gonna see it, and it doesn't work like that. Finally you come down to the realization that, you know, we've really been handed a crock of doodles, you know, I mean from day one, with Santa Claus, and making presents. Why is there all the excitement?"

"It's very important," he went on, "what we put out. There's such a distortion of our heroes, again . . . like John Wayne, I mean, he was a redneck schmuck, you know? All he did was punch people



AP/Wide World

On his self-imposed exile in Holland, Serpico showed the strain of being a perpetual outcast in an imperfect world.

out. I mean, what kind of hero is this? And now there's this Mr. T. I mean, it's so unrealistic, because he's supposed to be against drugs, and talkin' to the kids in the ghetto . . . where the hell are they gonna get that kind of money? You know, he's carryin' a couple million in gold. I mean, where is the reality there? And he's certainly putting out a contradictory message. So, anyway . . ." He was starting to close out again . . . "maybe, who knows, at some other time, we'll be able to do something along those lines, but . . . this is where we are . . ."

We went back and forth another couple of exchanges, but that was it for the night, and we closed out with him wishing me "all the best," and telling me it was nice talking to me. When we finally got off the phone I looked at the clock; we had been talking for almost an hour and a half.

I thought of the conversation as only the first step toward getting Serpico to sit down for a "real" interview. Over the next day, and the next, I kept trying to figure out what would turn the key to get him to talk. Obviously, something inside him wanted to talk, if he thought he had a sympathetic ear. But what in him wanted to talk, and what didn't?

The more I thought about his insistence that nothing would make any difference, the angrier I found myself getting with him. Everything had to bring on the millenium or it was worthless. And all the stuff about not believing in God, the Big Guy who was

going to take care of everything . . . Serpico still believed in a Big Guy, I thought. He had rejected the image of a God who was going to come down and save him and had accepted, instead, the image of a faceless "they" who were never going to let anything change. It was the other side of the same coin.

I decided to take the train out to where he lived the next day and call him from a local bar. Maybe if I caught him off guard he would meet with me, and I could confront him with what I thought. I believed that Serpico had greatness in him; it was a tragedy that he had settled for what he had. The idea that I was being unbelievably self-righteous had, as you can see, not yet occurred to me. I went to bed with all the questions fizzing in my head.

Sunday morning was gray and damp and not too cold. I got up, made coffee, and started to get my stuff together. I hadn't slept well; dreams had kept me restless all night. Something was bothering me, but I didn't know what it was. I packed up a small duffel bag with all my notes, my copy of *Serpico*, a legal pad, my cassette recorder, four spare cassettes, fresh batteries that I had bought the day before, and an extra sweater in case the temperature dropped. I felt as if I were going on a hunting trip. I thought about bringing a camera and decided I wouldn't need it. The bag was getting full.

When I had everything together, I sat at my desk for a while drinking some coffee and trying to wake up a little. Talking to Serpico on the phone had introduced a different element into my understanding of him, something personal. Before, he was a matrix of ideas and themes, something I was trying to figure out, and now there was this other dimension. There was Serpico, and there was Frank. Which one was I going to visit?

Serpico was two things: It was the name on his lapel as a cop, and it was the title of a famous book and movie. It was almost an emblem of a myth, like the name McCarthy, or Lincoln, or Manson. Frank . . . nobody knew who Frank was. In fact, whoever Frank was, it was possible he had created Serpico so he wouldn't have to think too much about who Frank was. Then there was Paco, the name he liked his friends to call him. Frank was the one who felt all the pain, and Frank was the one I was interested in.

But the article was about Serpico, and what had happened to Serpico. Frank was tired of Serpico; he was trying to dismantle him. Serpico had become a dead end for him; he didn't want to talk about him anymore. That was OK; I wanted to get him to talk about Frank. But what legitimate interest could the world have in Frank? What, exactly, was I going out there to see?

It had occurred to me before that interviews tend to give the impression that the subject walks around constantly thinking about the things he discusses in the interview, but that might not be the case. He might be struggling to keep it quiet and the journalist stirs it up, breaks the scab, gets it bleeding again. What did I want from him? What did I need to see? The man wanted some peace in his life, he deserved some peace in his life. But I wanted to disrupt his peace . . . for what? For an exciting ending to the story? Maybe to get him to break down crying during the interview. That would be memorable. Why was I hounding him? Despite the recital of the injustices he felt he had suffered, he didn't sound bitter to me. Somehow, Frank Serpico had found a way to keep going, to be happy, even cheerful, day-to-day. Considering what he had gone through, that was an achievement.

I finished off my coffee, got my duffel bag, and took the subway down to Penn Station. When I got to the Long Island Railroad I bought my ticket and settled in for a 20-minute wait, but I knew I wasn't going out there. After 10 minutes I turned the ticket in. I decided to leave him alone.

MY SECRET LIFE!

ONE MAN'S BATTLE WITH BOREDOM!!



—Norman Dog

THE SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS

GUN-SHY

FIERCE.

The band—three young Brits with a gut instinct for the basics of rock, and no patience for prettiness or pretension. The sound—a litany of modern urban blues and R&B that boots past the poseurs and kicks down your door by way of introduction. The British critics—"it needs an album as strong as this to explode the current lethargy of pop music," said Melody Maker. The album—twelve tracks, including "Wild Blue Yonder," "Smash The Market Place" and "Twin Cadillac Valentine."

Gun Shy—the Screaming Blue Messiahs' debut LP. No frills, just thrills.



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The Philosophy of James Brown

Article by Scott Cohen

YEOWWWW! I feel good. UNH! I knew that I woulda. AHH! So good, I can't stand myself. I break up in a cold sweat.¹ HEY!

This is a man's man's man's world.² Man made the world, but what would it be without a woman or a girl?³

HELL! It's hell tryin' to make it when you're doin' it by yourself. It's hell payin' taxes⁴ when there's no money left. It's hell givin' up the best years of your soul. But it ain't no drag. Papa's got a brand new bag.⁵

A man has to go back to the crossroad⁶ before he finds himself.⁷ Sometimes it's tough, sometimes rough. Sometimes you love someone who don't love you enough.

Now dig this! Papa don't take no mess.⁸ Papadon't papadon't papadon't. OH YESSS! Look. Papa didn't cuss. He didn't raise a whole lotta fuss, but when we did wrong, Papa beat the hell out of us.

For goodness sakes, take a look at those cakes!⁹

Fellas, if you want to get down with a broad, this is the way you do it. Go up and rap to her.¹⁰ Put your hand on her lower left arm. I mean, come on with your come-on. With your bad self say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud. Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud. OOOH WEE! You're killin' me. Look-a-here. There's one more thing I wanna say: I'm black and I'm proud. EEEOWWWW! Maceo, come in here, and do your thing.

Now, sayin' it and doin' it are two different things. Either give it up or turn it a loose. Every trip's gotta be hipper than hip. You gotta make it funky.¹¹ Oh, yes,



Walter McBride/Rehna Ltd.

it gotta be funky. Turn on your funk motor and praise the Lord.

Do it on the good foot.¹² Get on the good foot. PART-Y on the good foot. It gotta be the good foot. Ain't nothing happening on the bad foot.

Don't be a dropout.¹³ Don't be a drag. Stay out of that bag.

Smokin' hot pants¹⁴ is where it's at. You gotta use what you got to get what you want. Hot pants make you sure of yourself. Hot pants make you wanna dance.

So get offa that thing and shake; you'll feel better. Get offa that thing, try to release that pressure.¹⁵ Watch me. I got somethin' that makes me wanna shout. I got soul and I'm superb. Sometimes I dance, sometimes I clown, but you can bet you haven't seen nothing yet until you see me do the James Brown.¹⁶ OWWW!

People, people. Well, well, well. We gotta get over before we go under. Let's get together and get some land,¹⁷ raise our food like the man. Save our money, do like the mob. And that's a fact. Brothers, get ready for the big payback.

Fellas, get ready to do your thing. Get into it, man, you know, like a sex machine. AHHH! Movin' and doin' it. Stay on the scene like a love machine. Can I take it to the bridge?¹⁸ Can I take it to the bridge? Maceo, come blow your horn.

OWW! I gotta tell you one more thing. Dig this! This will kill you. A little piece of money and plenty of love will keep everything together.¹⁹ Well, forget about the money. Plenty of love. Ain't that a groove! So long. Goodbye. I'm through. Just don't tell a lie about me, and I won't tell the truth about you.

1. The amount James Brown, "The Hardest Working Man in Show Business," sweats during an hour performance equals the average annual rainfall of Needles, California.

2. James Brown got the idea for "A Man's World" from a girl to whom he gave 50 percent of the million-seller's profits, although she didn't write one word of it.

3. The first female singer featured in the James Brown Revue was Bea Ford, ex-wife of Joe Tex and Brown's main squeeze for most of 1960. She was followed by Sugar Pie DeSanto; Yvonne Fair of the Chantels; Tammi Terrell, who went on to become a big star; Anna King; and Vicki Anderson, the first to last more than a year.

4. According to the Treasury Department, in 1975 the Godfather of Soul owed \$4.5 million in back taxes. In 1980 the IRS filed almost \$2.2 million in tax liens on his property, forcing him to sell his prize D-125 Sidley Hawker jet.

5. James Brown's new bag is made of elephant skin, with protective brass edges and "JB" embossed on it in gold. Inside are nine compartments for his capes, jumpsuits, and boots and a separate compartment for his hair curlers. According to Glenn O'Brien, James Brown gave his old bag to Kool and the Gang.

6. Broadway and 7th Avenue in Times Square, Broadway and Columbus in San Francisco, and Hollywood and Vine in Hollywood are popular crossroads.

7. James Brown found himself at the crossroad in 1953, when he married Velma Warren Brown; in 1969, when she slapped him with a divorce and a paternity suit; in 1970, when he married Deirdre Yvonne Jenkins on her porch in South Carolina; and again in 1983, when Deirdre and their two daughters ran off.

8. Mr. Joe Brown left home when James was four years old.

9. In 1969, James Brown opened a chain of

James Brown Gold Platter Pantry restaurants in Georgia.

10. This is what you say: "Baby, gimme my thang." Or, "Feels so good, let's get it on," "Let's make it stoned to the bone," "Give me some more," "OOO-OOO! Make me scream."

11. James Brown, "The Man Who Never Left," made the world funky in the late '60s. Prior to that, funky, according to Webster's, meant having an offensive odor.

12. From row M, seat 17, James Brown's good foot appears to be a 9½.

13. James Brown dropped out of school in the seventh grade and got a job pumping gas with his dad. When he was 16, he was busted in Augusta, Georgia, for breaking into four cars in one night. He was sentenced to 16 years hard labor in a state pen, but wound up only doing four years in a reformatory.

14. Placed in an oven, hot pants made of satin will start to smoke at 500°F., polyester

melts at 480°-550°F., and spandex, 446°-518°F.

15. By "thing," James Brown is referring to her butt, which he wants her to get off of and release his pressure.

16. If James Brown's name was Sol Melnick, this line would read, "Sometimes I dance, sometimes I kick, but you can bet you haven't seen nothing yet until you see me do the Sol Melnick." OWWW!

17. James Brown and his wife Deirdre owned 20 acres of land in Aiken County and the 62-acre Jaydee Ranch in South Carolina.

18. The toll on the George Washington Bridge is \$2 (eastbound); the Golden Gate, \$1 Sun. to Thurs., \$2 Fri. and Sat. (southbound); the 17.6-mile-long Chesapeake Bay Bridge costs \$9 each way; London's Tower Bridge over the Thames is £2 for both ways.

19. According to James Brown, a relationship based on money and love lasts, on the average, a couple of days.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing dark sunglasses and a bright pink short-sleeved button-down shirt, is posing against a dark background. She has one hand on her hip and the other behind her head, holding a lit cigarette. The overall mood is cool and sophisticated.

"Light my Lucky."

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